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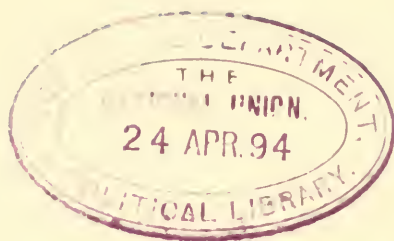












POLITICAL SPEECHES

BY

THE RIGHT HON. GEORGE  
J. GOSCHEN, M.P.

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POLITICAL SPEECHES

BY

THE RIGHT HON.

GEORGE J. GOSCHEN

M.P.

*DELIVERED DURING  
THE GENERAL ELECTION 1885*



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## P R E F A C E.

THE republication of Election Speeches must always be a matter of some delicacy. The colour given to various controversies is generally laid on somewhat thickly in a period of political excitement, and topics of temporary interest are lifted into abnormal importance. But, in the late contest in the Eastern Division of Edinburgh, my own position, as a Candidate unopposed by a Conservative, relieved me to a great extent from the necessity of reiterating party common-places, and from taking part in the recriminatory rhetoric which is unavoidable in ordinary elections. I was thus enabled to devote a considerable part of my attention to social and economic questions of general and permanent interest, and also to treat, from an independent point of view, the impending Irish crisis, the issues involved in which were not at that time directly submitted to the constituencies, but have since become of absorbing interest.

The discussion of these subjects was naturally interspersed with matters of lesser moment, and with some warm polemics. But, in acting on the suggestion of friends that I should reprint my Addresses, I have felt that it would not be right for me to publish only selected speeches or special passages. If I published at all, it seemed to me that I was bound to reproduce practically all my utterances. I did not wish to make an *ex post facto* selection, retaining only what I might wish remembered, and omitting what I might wish forgotten. It would have been unfair to leave out prophecies, of which the accuracy is already threatened, or expressions of confidence, which experience has shown to have been conceived in too sanguine a vein. Thus I present my speeches as I delivered them, only here and there omitting some obvious repeti-

tions. One speech, made in a Ward Meeting at Edinburgh, was so much interrupted, that it could not be reproduced as spoken, but I have embodied the most important portion of it—a discussion of the Egyptian Question—in another address, in which, as a matter of fact, I had originally intended to include it.

I will not deny that, in correcting these speeches for the press, I have sometimes smiled at the extraordinary change in the general political situation which has taken place since November last. I must ask those who read me, indulgently to carry themselves back for the moment to the circumstances of that day.

G. J. GOSCHEN.

LONDON, *8th March* 1886.

# I.

Delivered at St. Leonards, on the 18th September 1885.

Mr. GOSCHEN said—I do not know how many of you in this room I may address as brother electors of the Rye Division of Sussex. I am here to-night in my capacity as an elector for this Division, and I am here to congratulate this Association on having taken an early opportunity of showing that the south-eastern parts of the United Kingdom are not behind the rest in their strong interest in the great controversy which is now being waged throughout the length and breadth of the land. We are sometimes told that in the south-eastern and southern parts of the United Kingdom we have not advanced to the political intelligence which is displayed in Lancashire and the northern constituencies. Let us do what in us lies to disprove the charge. The south of England has lost some of its representatives, and the numbers thus saved in the representation have been distributed among more populous neighbourhoods. Let us look to it that we make the best use of the representation left to us. I do not know that there has been any more momentous time in the political history of this country than the present. Not only has there been a new extension of the franchise, but the electoral divisions have been re-adjusted, and a process has been going on in politics which might be likened to the breaking up of the regimental system in the Army. Still, we must not exaggerate. Much is said now about the *transfer* of power to the masses. I prefer to speak of the *repartition* of power, because power must remain, and I trust will remain, distributed amongst *all* classes of this country. Some people talk as if certain classes had been disfranchised, because certain other classes have been enfranchised. If that were so, it would be a result which all would have to deplore; but it is not the case.

*The New Political Situation.*

Power is still distributed among all classes of the country, notwithstanding the immense change which has taken place.

But it is not only the new Reform Act which makes the present moment so important. New questions have come to the front, new problems are pressed forward for solution, and, above all, we have looming before us a danger of which it is almost impossible to exaggerate the significance. In the next Parliament, both of the old parties in the State may find themselves—probably will find themselves—confronted with eighty determined men, with regard to whom it has been announced beforehand that, unless their demands are conceded, they will make all legislation impossible. This announcement by the Irish Nationalist party must be present to the mind of every elector and every candidate. This, then, is the situation at the present moment. We have new forces opposed to us; we have to deal with new questions; and in this new conflict on new ground we are confronted by menaces which threaten the very existence of Parliament. You will judge with me whether such facts do not call for steadiness.

I do not propose to trouble you particularly to-night with any references to myself. In a few weeks' time it will fall to my lot to address a constituency in Scotland to whom it will be my duty to state my opinions upon every important political question in which they are interested, and I shall have to go through the process, called "heckling" by the Scotch, which consists in a very lively cross-examination of the candidate—a process which I expect a good many of those who are here present will apply to my friend Mr. Inderwick in the various meetings which he will hold. Let me add, as an elector of this Division, that I wish Mr. Inderwick most cordial success.

What I desire to do to-night is to address you on a few, but they must be a few only, of those many difficult questions which have lately been brought to the front, remembering that we have not only to deal with programmes, but with the enunciation of many principles, of many doctrines, of many views, some of which are of startling novelty. We are told that we must distinguish between the actual programme of the party, and those more general views which every Liberal is fully at liberty to put forward. Yes, I shall not fail to bear this in mind. It has been well said that every member of the Liberal party is at liberty to state his views.

But let it be distinctly understood that it is a right and a privilege which will be equally claimed by all sections.

I do not know whether all who are in this room to-night are *Mr. Gladstone's* aware that we have at last a statement coming from our great *Manifesto.* leader, Mr. Gladstone, published this afternoon. We have at last an authoritative statement of the main questions with regard to which the Liberal party will be invited to act together. I have only been able to read Mr. Gladstone's Manifesto within the course of the last hour, and consequently it would be impossible for me to do justice to its contents. To-morrow throughout the length and breadth of the country, every politician, to whatever party he belongs, will be studying this important document, clothed, as they will find it to be, with all the dignity of a statesman who numbers more than fifty years' service, with the deepest and most attentive interest. One thing I think I can say with regard to it at once. Those who have read the speeches of a statesman, who has been well called by a Liberal paper "The Heir-apparent to the Leadership" *The Position of Lord Hartington.*—I mean Lord Hartington—will find that the four great questions which he has put forward in his programme, form the main items of the Manifesto which you all will read to-morrow. I would like to say one word with regard to Lord Hartington. Lord Hartington is a modest man—a great disadvantage in these somewhat pushing days. But I think that his modesty and his occasional self-effacement do not justify shortness of memory on the part of the party whom he has served so well. Generals do not become great and earn the gratitude of their country only when they lead an army to victory. It sometimes falls to the lot of Generals to have to manœuvre an army inferior in numbers in the face of a hostile army elated by victory. That was the case of Lord Hartington. After the disastrous days of 1874, when we were heavily beaten, and when for a time we had been deprived of the guidance and the presence of our illustrious chief, Lord Hartington led our shattered and disorganised force in a manner which commanded the confidence of the country and the respect of his very opponents. These are services which ought not to be forgotten, especially when one remembers that the patience and the bravery which he displayed when in command were equalled by the loyal self-abnegation with which he at once handed over, when the time came, the reins of power, and stepped down into the position of a General of Division. No member of our party

has the right to deny that Lord Hartington is a veteran Liberal, fully entitled to the confidence of every one of us.

But I saw the other day that his speech had been called a wet blanket. Well, it was not a wet blanket, and, considering what we have been told the authoritative programme of the Party is to be, you can judge whether it was fair on the part of my friend, Mr. John Morley, for whom I have a great respect, to call it a wet blanket. But, gentlemen, after all there are some moments when a wet blanket is rather a useful article. If there is too much combustible material about, a wet blanket can have its uses, and I am not sure whether it is for those who are themselves accustomed to deal in combustible materials to complain that there are others who are standing by with a wet blanket in case of need. Now, what are the points on which the Liberal Party is united? In the first place, I think we are all agreed upon this, that there must be immediate reform in the procedure of the House of Commons. The majority, whichever party they may belong to, must not be defrauded by the minority of their opportunities, not to serve themselves, but to serve the majority of the country, which sent them into the House of Commons to do their duty. Those who are not in the House of Commons cannot realise how the members must feel when, night after night, they see devices tried which entirely check their activity, and which not only defeat the measures which are being proposed, but degrade the great assembly of which every member of the United Kingdom ought to be proud. The constituencies must understand that we shall not be able to carry out their wishes unless we have the mandate that the majority is to be supreme. But more than that, we must be able to ensure that Parliament shall be able to command what it has always done, the confidence and respect of the country. I say, then, that one of our earliest duties will be to place ourselves in a position in which we can do our work well and worthily. If there are dangers and difficulties before us greater than any with which we have yet had to deal, we must feel that the nation is behind us, and determined that Parliament shall do its work.

*Reform of  
Procedure.*

*Reform of  
the House  
of Lords.*

A somewhat more critical subject is the reform of another portion of the Legislature, which, it is true, does not suffer from obstruction as we suffer, but which is sometimes itself accused of obstruction. I am speaking of the House of Lords. Now, I have no hesitation in saying that I am myself strongly



in favour of the existence of a Second Chamber, an authoritative strong Second Chamber, commanding the respect of the country. You will find that Mr. Gladstone has touched this topic in a very delicate way, in the Manifesto which you will read to-morrow, and it is clear that from him we have not to expect any attack upon what may be called the existence of the House of Lords. But I am not at all sure that, in the interest of the Lords themselves—in the interest of the maintenance of a Second Chamber—serious reforms, in the spirit displayed by Lord Rosebery, ought not to be accomplished. From what I read in the utterances of those who are best authorised to speak for the Liberal party, I do not think that legislation of any kind will be proposed at an early date with regard to the House of Lords. I believe that the House of Lords, if so minded, might escape the necessity of such reform; for whatever may be the views in certain portions of the country, I believe that the feeling which exists in the majority of the Liberal party with regard to the House of Lords does not arise so much from their being an hereditary body, or an aristocratic body, as from this, that they are a permanent Conservative or Tory Committee. Why should that be so? Why should the majority of the Peers always be Conservative? The Peers are under a great advantage as compared with members of the House of Commons. They have no constituencies. The Peers are not bound—as most members are, through our party system—to swear allegiance to any Parliamentary chief. If there were a body of Peers in the House of Lords who were not prepared to vote at the bidding of a Minister, but who were prepared to judge of questions as they came before the House of Lords, simply from a national point of view—if sometimes they would venture to correct the mistakes of their own friends—if there was a body of men in the House of Lords not influenced by the passing feeling of the moment, who would decide without regard to party lines—the House of Lords would enjoy a confidence which it does not enjoy at present, and which it cannot enjoy so long as there is a permanent majority in it belonging to either political party. I am not speaking against a particular majority, but I say that for a legislative body to have a permanent majority belonging to one political party in the State is a danger to that body itself.

I pass to another point, on which I believe the Liberal party *Local Govern-* are absolutely unanimous—the necessity to proceed forthwith, and *ment.*

with the greatest energy, to the reform of Local Government and of Local Finance. I think that we are not only all agreed as to the fact that this must be at once taken in hand, but we are also agreed generally as to the principles on which that reform should take place. I recently read with great pleasure the following passage in a speech of Mr. Chamberlain:—"I want to build up a system of local government from below, from small beginnings. I would like to see no parish, no village, without some kind of local authority. I do not want to crush out the germs of local life, however small and insignificant they may appear. I want to foster them, and to promote the political education of the people. Then I want to see local authorities with wider areas and larger functions to deal with local matters in districts and in counties, and in this way I should expect to find the whole country covered with a network of popular representative bodies." Now, gentlemen, I am the more in accord with every word of that passage which I have read to you, because it fell to my lot, when I was a member of Mr. Gladstone's previous Administration, to embody the principles which are here enunciated in a bill which I had the honour to submit to Parliament. I was much criticised at the time; but I held, as Mr. Chamberlain holds now, that the smallest village should know who its chief man was. I was anxious that we should create a sense of local responsibility, and I am not enamoured of Boards. There is something about a Board which, to my mind, does not inspire so much confidence as the opportunity of dealing with a man who can personally be held responsible. And so I proposed that in every village there should be some responsible head man. I was extremely anxious that throughout the rural communities you should be able to develop some civic life, which, as is said in the passage I have read to you, "might promote political education." I trust that the Liberal party will go forward on these lines—on broad lines—and that they will look not only to excellence and economy of administration—though those are most important points—but that they will also look to the interest which shall be taken in local affairs, and to the creation of a sense of public duty in every village in the country. Yes, gentlemen, public duty—not only public advantage, not only class advantage, not only the hope of securing the power to draw some pecuniary gain, but the sense that all our citizens should have some share in the government of this

great Empire—public duty in civic life and public duty in political life, without too much care or too much talk about the advantages to be derived by particular classes in the community!

I have spoken of Local Government. I now approach that other subject, which is foremost, perhaps, in the minds of most men on both sides at the present moment—the question of Land. I entirely go with those who are in favour of making land as saleable as consols. I entirely go with those who think that the whole system of settlement and entail, and the questions resulting from the custom of primogeniture, must be dealt with in the direction of setting land free as much as possible. To make land pass as easily as possible from hand to hand, must be one of our first duties, and it must be the business of our lawyers to find means by which it may be done. We must not be told that it is impossible. It is difficult, but it has been done in other countries, where the tenure of land is almost as complicated as in our own. I am as anxious, I believe, as any man in the Liberal party, that the number of those who possess freehold property should be increased as much as possible. And I go so far as to say that, even if the aggregate produce of the soil, if the wealth produced should be less under a system by which land is more diffused and holdings are smaller, the social and political advantages of land being held, ay, and farmed, by an infinitely greater number of people, would counterbalance and outweigh the economical considerations on the other side. I go forward, therefore, with those land reformers who are operating in this direction; and one of the first duties of the new Parliament will clearly be to take these matters in hand.

Now, it is said by some critics who have seen Lord Hartington's speech, and, possibly, it may be said by some of those who will read Mr. Gladstone's Manifesto to-morrow, that in these proposals there is not much to which Conservatives could object. All I can say is, that, if this is the case, so much the better. Then the Liberal party will be able to achieve without trouble those objects which it has so long had at heart. I do not object to the Conservatives coming over to our views. Why should we? I saw that Lord Randolph Churchill said that he agreed with every word of Lord Hartington's speech. All I can say is, that I doubt whether Lord Hartington would return the compliment. If he could, that would prove that Lord Randolph Churchill, and those who may fol-

*The Land  
Question.*

*Competition of  
Parties for  
Popular  
Measures.*

low him, have made a very considerable advance. But this does not prove that Lord Hartington's programme is not Liberal. I attach great importance to the consideration of this point. Surely I shall have you with me in this view? Do not think that any proposal ceases to be Liberal because the Conservatives are at last convinced that it is a proper proposal. Otherwise, what would be the result? The moment the Liberals proposed their measures, the Conservatives, ceasing to have many principles which are opposed to ours, would say, "Oh, we are perfectly ready to introduce the same Bills." Then are we to say that we will go further? Are the two great parties in the State to set up a kind of auction? And is political power to be knocked down to the men who are simply prepared to bid highest? There is some danger of such an auction being set up, but I believe that the good sense and the straightforwardness of the constituencies will help them to see through any such manœuvres; and I believe, notwithstanding the late great measure of enfranchisement, that the adherence of the Liberal party to the old traditions will still command respect and support amongst the great bulk of the population. But not only do some Conservatives say they approve of the Liberal programme. There is considerable truth in a remark made, I think, by Mr. Chamberlain, that the Conservatives not only favoured the measures approved by what is called the Whig section of the party, but that they actually appropriated a very large number of Mr. Chamberlain's special and favourite proposals, and carried them into effect during the brief period of three or four weeks while they enjoyed power. During those three weeks their development was considerable. But the point which I am anxious to enforce is this, that the country must not think that, because the Conservatives say that they approve of certain proposals which Liberals also approve of, therefore those proposals cease to be Liberal.

*Mr. Morley on Whigs and Radicals.* But the advanced section say, "If you are not prepared for changes"—I think they call them violent, but at any rate they are very great, changes—"if you are not prepared for very great changes, why did you enfranchise the masses? The average Liberals must have known when they enfranchised the masses that they would not be satisfied with such measures as had been previously proposed." My answer is that the argument has been completely shifted lately. The argument used to be that the masses

should be enfranchised because enfranchisement broadened the basis of the Constitution, because it was right that every man should have a vote, and because Parliament would be enabled to ascertain better the wants and desires of the whole community; but it was not put forward that this change was to be used as a lever for the reversal of the traditions of the Liberal party. Mr. J. Morley said the other evening, "If there is any difference between the Radical section and the Liberal section, it is simply this, that the former are now resolved that we can no longer trifle and play with questions which have been settled in the popular judgment for ten or fifteen years, but must proceed to deal with them practically and seriously." My friend Mr. Morley is entirely in error in saying that there is a difference between the Radical and Whig section in this respect. I believe that the Whig section is as determined and as resolved as the Radicals that we should go forward, and that we should not trifle and play with questions which have been settled in the public judgment for the last ten or fifteen years. I am delighted to think of the additional impetus which will now be gained, and which will promote the settlement of those questions on which the country has made up its mind during this period. But when absolutely new doctrines are put forward, while it is right—no doubt, perfectly right—that a fair hearing should be given them by all sections of the Liberal party, it is also right that those who do not accept those doctrines should be allowed to examine and try them by the light of history, of common-sense, and of common experience. And here I say that those who oppose or criticise and examine measures of this kind ought not to be taxed with different motives from those which animate the other section of the party. I believe that we all wish for the same result, and I protest against men being denounced as selfish, or apathetic, or callous, because they cannot believe in specific proposals which do not commend themselves to their judgment, and which the light of history has hitherto proved to be impossible, to be incapable of realising the objects which their authors wish them to realise. I say it is unfair to accuse those who differ from particular views as to the best modes in which to proceed, of any indifference as to the end to be achieved. We should be wrong indeed, those of us who do not assent to particular proposals which we may think dangerous to the class for which they are proposed, —we should be traitors to our consciences and to our convictions,

if we did not venture to stand forward with the same courage as the authors of those proposals, and say in the face of our countrymen how we regard them.

*Utopian  
Ideas.*

I have said I am as anxious as any advanced Liberal to increase the numbers of those who occupy the soil, and I want to see as many of the population interested in the possession of freehold property as possible. Now, I am told that this system can be brought about by a process of allotments to be given by local authorities. They are to purchase land, and then to let it out in allotments. I do not think such a plan will succeed, although the granting of allotments would doubtless be desirable. I am as anxious as any one that every labourer in rural villages should have an allotment, but I am not convinced as to the particular method which has been proposed. But even if it should succeed, while I believe it will increase the comfort and the happiness of those who have the allotments, yet to hope that by such a system confided to local authorities you will be able to empty the work-houses, and to raise wages throughout the United Kingdom—I say honestly, I think that is a Utopian idea. If it is Utopian, I entreat electors and candidates that at this critical moment of our history they should not sow seed which must come up, if not at the present moment, yet must come up some day in expectations which Parliament, even with the most anxious desire to promote the object, may not be able to fulfil. I may once more quote from Mr. Morley. He says—“Surely it would be wrong to place before constituencies this cause and that cause; and that then, when it had served its purpose, it should be put back.” I entirely agree with Mr. Morley, and therefore I say, do not let us be misled by generous but Utopian dreams to think that we can do what has been proved to be impossible—namely, by Act of Parliament to increase the happiness of the masses. The question is put in this way, What can we do to augment the material resources of the poor? That is a problem which has taxed the energies, which has taxed the minds of statesmen and philosophers for the last 2000 years. It is a question which has been studied in Republics and under despotisms; it has been studied in Constitutional countries, and the problem has not yet been solved. It is a problem which must engage the attention and the sympathy of every politician, but we cannot think that the moment has come when, by one stroke of the pen, by establishing local

authorities who will give allotments to the agricultural labourers, we shall be able to raise the rate of wages throughout the United Kingdom.

But it is said that Parliament, and the classes who have been hitherto holding power, have done nothing to improve the condition of the industrious and most numerous class. I ask old Liberals in this hall—I ask those who have followed the politics of this country during the last forty years—I ask those who remember the services of Cobden, of Bright, of Villiers, and of Gladstone—has nothing been done to improve the condition of the most numerous class? Is bread no cheaper through the action of the Legislature under the guidance of the Liberal party? Have we not passed laws which have helped to raise the status of those classes of whom I speak? Are we to forget the Education Acts? Are we to forget the abolition of the Laws of Settlement? Are we to forget that we have enabled—as we were bound to enable—the working-classes to combine together, in order to use their united strength, so far as they could, to raise their wages? Have we not done our best to abolish the laws which laid fetters on the industry of working men? I think there is a large reward to those who have laboured in this field, in the improved condition of the masses of this country. I do not know whether they have improved as compared with the fifteenth century, but certainly they have improved in comparison with forty or fifty years ago. Wages are higher, clothes are cheaper, food is cheaper, the working man is better remunerated, and sanitary laws have been passed of the greatest possible service. It is a libel upon the Liberal party, which has for so many years been able to wield the destinies of this country, to say that they have done nothing for the most numerous and most industrious class of the people. Certainly let us go forward; we must all recognise that new needs have sprung up, and that the great complexities of modern civilisation constantly require us to modify our views, and by no hard and fast lines to refuse to consider new proposals, however startling they may seem; but let us not libel the past!

One of the most favourite opinions of the present day—and not only in this country, but elsewhere,—not only in our Colonies and in the United States, but on the Continent of Europe—is, that the time has come when the State and the community and local bodies must more and more interfere, and when there should be a

*Achievements  
of the Old  
Liberals.*

*The Indi-  
vidual and the  
Community.*

substitution of a corporate conscience for the conscience of the individual man. Now, I hold by the conscience of the individual man. It seems sometimes as if the idea were going abroad that all corporations are virtuous, and that all individuals are rascals; but, for my part, I do not believe that human nature clothes itself with every Christian virtue the moment it assumes the robes of an alderman or the uniform of a functionary of State. There are good corporations and bad; there are good landlords and bad. But in these proposals, when the local corporations are made the arbiters of the destinies of society, I hope the question will sometimes be put, Can these corporations be so implicitly trusted as to put our destinies into their hands? You know I am in favour of investing them with as much representative character as possible. But I do ask my fellow-countrymen to pause before they go too far in the direction of believing in the immaculate virtue and generosity of local authorities in comparison with the efforts of the individual.

*Free Education.*

There is another subject, discussed in Mr. Gladstone's Manifesto, upon which I should wish to say a few words, and which illustrates the difficulty of the problem I have put before you, and the arguments which may be used on either side. It is the question whether education should not be free. I will not call it exactly "free education"—because education cannot be given gratis. The point is, whether a different set of people should pay for primary education from those who are paying for that education at present. That is the fair way of putting the question. The arguments with regard to free education are discussed by Mr. Gladstone in his Manifesto, and I think no one will read his views without seeing that, while he is open to conviction, his mind is against the system of free education. I am not going to spoil his arguments by retailing them to you at second hand, but I should like to say one word to enforce them by an argument which I think he does not use. As I am anxious that the individual should not be lost sight of in favour of substituting local authority upon every possible occasion, so I wish to maintain, as strongly as possible, the sense of parental duty. If a portion of the working-classes cannot afford to send their children to school, that may be an argument for lightening their taxation, and for easing their condition in every way. But I do not think that to dispense with the payment of the school fees is the best mode of dealing with this



most difficult and most complicated question. Personal experience, in this county of Sussex, where we have to deal with some very poor agricultural labourers, leads me to believe that it is not the school pence which stand in their way so much as the natural desire to secure the services of their children on certain occasions when urgently required. The payment of the school fees, far from causing them to feel irritated against education, makes them anxious that their child shall get full value for the money. I trust I am the last man to think that if anything can be done to promote the cause of education, it is right to leave it undone. I have laboured in that cause, as far as I have been able, with all zeal. But I do not believe that education will be fostered by the free system, nor am I convinced that in countries where it exists, more value is placed on education than is placed upon it here; and I am not prepared at the present moment to accept the arguments on the other side.

Yet there is much to be done in the way of education still. There is a period, perhaps more in the towns than in the country—between fourteen years and eighteen years—which is quite a blank in the education of the children of the industrial classes. For young persons of eighteen years there are evening classes, there are lectures, and many other means by which they can improve their education. But after the age of fourteen, they frequently have forgotten so much, that they are unable to avail themselves of the opportunities offered to them. I rejoice to think that there is a movement in progress in the Midland Counties which aims at establishing an organization to continue the education of the working people between the ages of fourteen and eighteen. We must, indeed, labour at the education of our people. We must feel—all of us, Liberal and Conservative alike—that, in view of the increasing competition which foreign nations raise against us in almost every department of trade, we have to look to it, that our working men shall be educated up to the highest possible standard at which working men ought to aim, and are entitled to aim, in their respective vocations.

I trust you will see in what I have said, that I heartily concur in *Ireland.* most of the work which the Liberal party has set itself to do, and I agree entirely with that portion of it which has been put forward, on authority, as the work with which the Liberal party must at once commence to deal. But now let me allude once more

to a point, with which I commenced my observations. It is this, How are we to pass those measures on which we have set our hearts if we are to be met by the Irish members with an opposition such as that with which they have threatened us? What is the attitude of Great Britain to be in view of the menaces which have been uttered by the Irish Nationalist party? I am sure that all of you will have followed these painful episodes, and I believe there is no constituency in England or Scotland which will not exact from its members loyal allegiance to the integrity of the United Kingdom. Some one has lately said that it would be indeed a disgrace to England if we were to leave Ireland to be the cauldron of revolution. It would be a disgrace to England and a disaster to Ireland. In his Manifesto, Mr. Gladstone speaks, in such terms as become him, of the necessity of maintaining this unity. I am not able, on a first reading of the Manifesto, to see what measures, if any, he proposes with regard to Ireland; but I think that we may all be certain that he will lead the Liberal party to resist every proposal which will in any degree shake, not only the unity, but the legislative unity, of the United Kingdom. Unity is not enough, for there might be simply unity under the Crown. There must be legislative unity between the two countries.

*Conservative  
Flirtation  
with  
Parnellites.*

A great deal has been said with regard to the action of the Conservative party with reference to the Parnellite members, and the greatest possible indignation prevails amongst Conservatives at the fact that it should have entered into the heads of any Liberals that there could be any kind of understanding, or any kind of alliance, between the Nationalist members and the great Conservative party. Sometimes it is convenient to have a short memory. I do not wish to say anything offensive, and therefore, when I am told that there is no understanding and no alliance, I at once accept the statement. It would be a disgrace to the Conservative party if there were any such understanding, and I believe it would shatter that party into two. But short of that, I wonder whether the charge of coquetting with the Irish members would be disclaimed with the same eagerness by the Conservatives. All I can say is this, that if there was no flirtation, I certainly saw myself much that looked uncommonly like it. And what is more, there were a number of Conservatives who thought so themselves. I wonder whether the Conservatives have

forgotten a little episode at Liverpool, when two highly honourable and worthy members of the Conservative party refused to go to Liverpool to meet one of their chiefs; I wonder whether they have forgotten what the Conservative press to a great extent wrote after the famous Maamtrasna debate? I was in the House that night, and as I stood at the door, some Conservative members rushed past me, saying of speeches which had been made from their front bench, "We cannot stand this." They did not understand it; they could not understand the attitude of their leaders towards Lord Spencer. They could not understand how a man, who had come back having held his life in his hand in Ireland, having done a great service to the Crown and country, should meet with such cold praise, if praise it was, and with such sneers, for sneers they were, at the hands of different members of the Conservative party. And what said one of the most influential organs of the Conservative party after that? "We say, without the least hesitation, that it would be a thousand times better that the Conservative party were once more in opposition rather than that we should again be exposed to the humiliation of such a speech as that which Lord Randolph Churchill delivered. The national conscience has been shocked by the ungracious requital of the difficult and dangerous services which Lord Spencer has discharged with as much success as intrepidity." This was not the rebuke of a partisan. It was the denunciation uttered by the chief organ of the Conservative party. It was a humiliation which we witnessed that night, and this humiliation did not fall only upon one party—it was a humiliation of Parliament, of Great Britain, which we witnessed that evening; and so the Conservatives cannot be surprised if, under these circumstances, the country did look for some stronger answers to be made to the menaces of Mr. Parnell than those which were made by Lord Randolph Churchill in his speech at Sheffield. It was vicariously that he opposed Mr. Parnell. He did not say a word in answer to Mr. Parnell. All he said was that he agreed with what Lord Hartington had said. That is not what one would have expected from one of the chief leaders of the Conservative party on such an occasion. I have failed, too, to find in the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer last night, any such conviction of the danger with which we are going to be confronted, as we have seen in the speeches of Lord Hartington and Mr. Chamberlain.

An "Irish  
National  
Council."

The view has been put forward that there should be an elective National Council for Ireland—an elective central National Council. Such a body would be a political body. It would be, in a sense, a Parliament sitting in Dublin. I have no time to argue—I should exhaust your patience long before I had finished—on the subject of this proposed Central Council. But I will say that the establishment of such a Council would frustrate the one great object of the Liberal party, namely, the development of local life in Ireland. If local government is given to Ireland, if large powers are to be put into the hands of the Irish by means of County Councils, or other local Councils; if you are going to satisfy their desire to manage their own *local* affairs, you will have called up a sentiment which will not be dangerous to the Empire. But a Central Council would check the very development of local life, which it ought to be our object to promote. You would have the same political men, who would endeavour to use their power in the Central Council for the purpose they have publicly announced—for securing an independent Legislature for Ireland. Let us have local bodies for local affairs, but do not let us commit the folly of erecting a Council which would be a miniature Parliament, and thus encouraging the Irish to hope for that legislative independence which I believe this country is determined not to grant.

I have spoken with freedom to-night, and I trust that in the coming campaign all will use the same privilege. We cannot suppress the convictions of the various sections of our party. There is no desire that they should be suppressed; but there must be complete reciprocity; there must be leave and license given to us all to speak from our hearts and from our consciences, undeterred by depreciatory epithets. I am not satisfied with some of the language which is used with regard to what is called sometimes the Whig section of the party, sometimes the moderate Liberals. Our critics are apt to speak of us as the weaker brethren. To refuse to be pushed along by a crowd, is not a sign of weakness. I do not think it is a sign of weakness if you are determined to stand by what you believe, and I could fancy no form of cowardice more contemptible than to swerve from duty lest you should be thought a coward. As for Liberal candidates on the moderate side, they will know whether pressure is put upon them or not. It is conceivable, I hope it is

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not probable, that pressure might be put upon such candidates by an advanced organization and by affiliated caucuses. But there is a power in the country which cannot be affected by a caucus,—the voters in the constituencies; and there are hundreds and thousands of voters, quiet men very likely, who are not so fond of attending meetings as those who are more advanced, who will be alienated from Liberalism, and who will not appear at the poll, if they are threatened with measures outside the programme of our leader, in language which is contrary to its spirit. I am doing a service to the party in speaking out. The danger exists, and it is well that it should be recognized. But as regards the moderate Liberals, if they are wanted in the next Parliament to assist in Government, in order to make Government possible and to meet combinations of the enemies of the Empire, they will be there. They will stand to their guns, and I do not think that they will be amongst the least useful defenders of the interests of the Empire. The great Duke of Wellington was once about to give orders to storm a position, and two companies were told off for the duty. The one were young troops whose eyes were flashing fire, and whose blood seemed to be coursing hotly through their veins. By them stood a company of veterans; their bearing was calmer, they knew well the danger of the duty they were to confront. On whom did the great Duke rely? He trusted to the veterans to storm the fort. In both political camps there are young generals whose eyes are glistening with martial fire, but I do not believe the country will dispense with the services of the veterans, or that it will wish those veterans to be put into the hindmost place.

## II.

Delivered at Edinburgh on the 7th October 1885.

*The Contest  
in the  
Division.*

Mr. GOSCHEN said—Electors of the Eastern Division of Edinburgh, I rejoice to see you here in such numbers to-night. Friends and opponents, critics and supporters, I am glad that you are all here. If it should be my good fortune to represent this Division of Edinburgh, I do not wish to enter by any back-door. I wish, if I am elected—as I hope to be—to be elected by the decided voice of the constituency. It is the first time during the more than twenty years of my Parliamentary life that I find myself at a contested election not opposed by those whom it has been my duty to oppose during the last twenty years—by the Conservatives—but find myself in opposition to a Liberal candidate. I shall try to remember during the contest which will take place—and I trust my friends and supporters will also remember—that this struggle represents a difference amongst ourselves; and I hope that the contest will be carried on throughout by fair argument, and with good temper upon both sides. If I do not fairly represent the views of the majority of the electors of this Division, then I have no wish for the seat; and I do not wish any services that I may have rendered in the past, of which the Chairman has spoken in too flattering terms—I do not wish that anything in my past career should have weight, unless I may feel, if I sit in Parliament, that I sit there as the chosen representative of the views of the majority of the electors of this Division.

I regret that those, who oppose me in this Division, put me, if I may say so, upon my defence. I shall be obliged not only to turn such arguments as may be in my armoury, against the political party to whom I have always been opposed; I shall also have to defend my position against those who are running another Liberal

against me. But it shall be done throughout, as I said just now, with good humour and by fair argument.

Gentlemen, after this preface, let me plunge at once into the heart of the situation—a situation grave indeed at the present moment. I do not know whether you all have sufficiently thought out the perils with which we are going to be faced in the new Parliament after the elections. If we, the Liberal party, have a triumphant majority, as we expect to have, what will be the first difficulty that will loom before us, and in proportions that it would be difficult to exaggerate? That difficulty will be Ireland. Already it has been announced that to the new Parliament the Parnellites will send a band of eighty determined men. Determined to do what? Determined, unless the thirty millions are prepared to bow to the wishes of five—determined to make all legislation impossible. We are discussing some differences amongst ourselves; we are discussing what we may include in our programme, and what ought to be excluded; but first of all let the country make up its mind, that it shall be possible, in spite of all difficulties that may be opposed to us, to carry out some programme at all. We are threatened with obstruction such as has scarcely yet been seen before, unless we are prepared to give that which the Liberal party will not give, that which the Conservative party, I hope, will not give—namely, legislative independence to one portion of these islands. It is for this reason that the reform in the procedure of the House of Commons has been put into the forefront of the programme, because by such reform only may we be able to give effect to the wishes of the people. We must be in a position to be able to face with success and with credit the opposition with which we have been threatened by Mr. Parnell.

And when such a reform is put forward in the Manifesto of the Leader of the Liberal party—when it is declared that it must be carried out, and when we who follow him, echo that determination—how has the point thus far been met by the Conservatives? They have not seen, and apparently they will not recognise, this fearful danger before us. They say that we are putting forward the reform of the procedure of the House of Commons in order to stifle debate, and in order to ride rough-shod over other parties in the House. I have looked most carefully through every speech—and they have been exceedingly numerous—which has

*The Irish  
Difficulty.*

*Attitude of  
Conservatives  
to Procedure.*

been made by various members of the Conservative party, and I have not found in one a declaration or a promise that, in reply to the menaces of Mr. Parnell, the Conservatives would co-operate with the Liberals in such measures for the reform of the procedure of the House of Commons as may be absolutely necessary for that purpose. I repudiate as a Liberal, in the strongest possible way, the notion that we—we of all people—are anxious to stifle debate. We have gained much in the past, and we hope to gain in the future, by the greatest freedom of discussion upon every possible political topic. But what will be the position? May we not appeal to the Conservatives, that if we should have a majority in the House of Commons, they should lend their assistance, at least on this one point—to help to render legislation possible? Depend upon it, it is only by unity and strength—unity and strength in the Executive Government of this country, and unity and strength amongst its supporters—that we shall be able to meet the difficulties that are before us. We are taunted with the unity on which we are determined. Never mind. That unity must be effective for its purpose—which is, to enable us to conduct the legislation of this country.

Well now, gentlemen, there is a far more—I am going to make this as a concession to my opponents and to my critics in this hall—there is a far more interesting speech going to be made to-night than it would be possible for me to make. That is the speech of Lord Salisbury. I wish I had had the opportunity of hearing that speech before I was speaking in this hall to-night. It would have been far more satisfactory, because in that speech we are bound to learn, what I think we have not learned hitherto, neither from Lord Iddesleigh nor from Lord Randolph Churchill, nor from the utterances of the present Leader of the House of Commons, Sir Michael Hicks Beach, what the attitude of the Conservative party towards the Parnellites is really going to be. The Conservatives are extremely angry that Liberal speakers—(a voice, “Whigs”). No, not only with the Whigs, nor chiefly with the Whigs. It is most extraordinary, but it is true, that if there is one party which has been more denounced than any other at present by the Parnellites, it is the extreme Radical party; and that is very unfair, because the Radicals have continually shown, as I trust the Whigs also have done, sympathy with Ireland, if not with the Nationalist party.



I am much obliged for the interruption just made, because it has reminded me of a sentiment to which I wish to give utterance—that it is a libel upon the majority of the inhabitants of this country, to tell them that, because they do not fall in with the views of Mr. Parnell and his followers, they are therefore indifferent to the interests of Ireland. If there is a man fit to take part in the politics of this country—if there is a man who has regard to its future—he must take the deepest interest in the sister island, tied as it is to this country in a union which I trust may never be dissolved.

Well, there is this curious point about the Conservative speeches that have been made about Ireland—they insist upon the fact that there is no agreement, that there is no understanding with the Parnellite party. I will accept this frankly, without any sarcasm or irony whatever. I will put it as strongly as I can. I will say I do not believe that there has passed between the two parties even that invisible wink, which sometimes passes between an auctioneer and a bidder; and I will believe that now they are doing their utmost—and may they be supported by all good citizens,—after a time of anxiety to a great portion of this country, including their own supporters,—they are now doing their utmost to put their foot down more firmly to maintain order in Ireland. I believe that is so, but what I want to know is this. The Conservatives are going to try to increase their strength—no, I won't put it so disagreeably to them—but it is a notorious fact that the Conservatives are going to be supported during these coming elections by the Irish vote. Well, I want to know what is to be the price? Is there any price at all? The price has not been bargained for, but I want to know, is it simply for the sake of seeing the Conservatives in office that the Irish vote is to be given to the Conservatives? Supposing, if such a thing is possible, that the Conservatives are placed on the Treasury Bench by the Irish vote, what is to be the consideration afterwards? I don't think Mr. Parnell is likely to say pleasantly to Lord Salisbury and his colleague, "We leave that to you." Even if he did, you know there is nothing more disagreeable than when a man has rendered you a service, and instead of naming his price says he will leave it to you. But we cannot suppose that Mr. Parnell does intend to leave it to Lord Salisbury. Well, then, what is to be the attitude of those sitting on the Treasury Bench, if they sit

*Their relations with the Parnellites.*

there through the Irish vote, and through the Irish vote alone, because without that I think they themselves admit they have not got the ghost of a chance of winning at the elections? Suppose they are there through the Irish vote, what are they to do? Have they a policy? Have they shadowed out that policy? Will Lord Salisbury shadow out that policy to-night; or will they drift on, waiting to see what will turn up? Will they see the state of Ireland getting worse and worse, and then say, "Well, what can we do, except apply for the advice of Lord Randolph Churchill?"

*The Policy of  
"Hard Cash."*

But we have seen a shadow of a policy. It has been sketched in rather vague words by Lord George Hamilton, and there are significant phrases in Sir Michael Hicks Beach's speech which point in the same direction. It is a policy of what Mr. John Morley has called "hard cash." As if in the present crisis of Irish affairs it would be possible by contributions from the Consolidated Fund to recover those loyal feelings from the sister isle which we so devoutly desire to see once more restored to us! By what means it may be possible once more to secure these affections, I do not know; but I do not believe that those affections can be bought with money. There are some men who, having become extremely rich, think that by their cheque-book they can solve all possible difficulties. If affection is to be bought, they say "cheque-book." If hatred is to be bought off, "cheque-book." If sorrow is to be assuaged, "cheque-book." Now, I want to know, do the Conservative party think, when they have got the national cheque-book in their hands, that they can write cheques simply in that way, and buy off hatred and secure affection? Do they think it is by money that they will be able to settle the difficulty which statesmanship has hitherto been unable to solve?

*Mr. Parnell  
and Protec-  
tion.*

Gentlemen, there is one more point that I should like to touch upon, and it is Mr. Parnell's view that the English hang to the Irish Union because of the commercial gains that they may be able to make out of the sister island. His last proposals in his speech in Wicklow seem to suggest that Ireland might ask to be allowed a certain period of protection to its native industry, but that that would be resisted by the greed of England and Scotland. It is not from any feelings of greed or cupidity that this island would oppose a policy such as that, but because in our hearts and consciences we believe that such a policy would be as disastrous to Ireland itself, as it would be disastrous to England and Scotland.

May one without offence point out to the Irish, that if in many ways we may supply them with some manufactures, they also have in this country a large market for one of their greatest and chiefest industries—and that is for the labour of Ireland? Are our towns not full of Irish labourers, working with English labourers in harmony and with good feeling? But if Ireland should attempt to close her ports against English manufactures, might it not imperil those relations, which, I pray God, may always exist between the Irish, the Scottish, and the English labourers? It is not for commercial reasons that we wish to remain tied—that we wish that Ireland should remain in the group which may we always be able to call Great Britain and Ireland! but it is because we believe it to be essential to our existence as a nation, because we believe that this group of islands must hang together, and be closely united, if its history in the future of the world is to resemble its history in the past.

Gentlemen, I really think I need make no apology for having treated at some length this Irish question, which, whether we wish it or not, will force itself upon the attention of Parliament. And I am obliged to say—I was obliged to say in my Address, and I think I have explained it by what I have said to you to-night—that it appears to me that there is a cloud of uncertainty hanging over the Conservative policy with regard to Ireland. I believe conscientiously, that an uncertainty exists which I hope may have been removed by Lord Salisbury's speech to-night.

I used another phrase in my Address to which attention has been called, namely, that there was a change of front on the part of the Conservative party. I have been challenged to say in what respect there has been a change of front. I thought that was notorious. I thought that every Conservative not only admitted there had been a change of front—I am not speaking of Ireland, but generally—I thought that he admitted it, and was proud of it, and believed that they had now found the solution of the riddle as to how Conservatives were to succeed in the future. I thought that that change of front had been accentuated and marked in many different ways, especially when, at the dictation of a young noble Lord, of whom I may say it is a great misfortune that he has been compelled by indisposition to be silent so long, because we wish to know from him what is going to be the future of the Conservative party—Sir Stafford Northcote was metamorphosed into Lord Iddesleigh

*Conservative  
Change of  
Front.*

Surely then a change of front took place, and the whole tone of the leadership in the House of Commons changed at the same time.

I do not believe that any Conservative who had had the misfortune of spending the last three weeks of the last session in the House of Commons would have ventured to put the question as to what was the change of front on the part of the Conservative party. I did not intend to say anything upon this subject to-night if I had not been challenged, because I thought that it had been disposed of in many ways; but I must confess that to see the Conservative party during the last three weeks of the session was a spectacle that did not make men glad. Witness the way in which they rushed at bills, which they had opposed before. Witness the Medical Relief Bill, and the celebrated race between two noble Lords as to who would be first at the House of Peers, in order to move some motion in regard to that bill, to which, I think, they both had been opposed before—typical of a general race at the end of the session between both parties to see how they could make most capital out of the most popular and democratic measures. I say it is one of the most noticeable features of English politics at the present day, that the Conservatives have abandoned most of their old traditions, and are now following so erratic a course that it is impossible to know at what point they may at any moment be landed. I repeat that, in the last year, though it has been coming on for some time, there has been a change of front.

There was a time when they used to oppose. A year ago, or two years ago, I think I said of them that they no longer opposed, but they only watched. By this time they have taken to inquire, and when they get into office, after having opposed, and watched, and inquired, then they propose, and take the measures of their Whig or Radical opponents. I believe they have just now said that they are not prepared with a programme. We are. And this brings me to the programme which has been put forward in Mr. Gladstone's Manifesto. I have already dealt with one of its topics, and I am in cordial agreement with it—namely, the Reform of the Procedure of the House of Commons. The next subject upon the list is one in which I take so great an interest that, as I think I told you when I had the honour of addressing an Edinburgh audience before, I was afraid of boring

an audience with it—namely, the important and interesting subject of Local Government, and the Reform of Local Taxation. I have seen it said that the Liberal party would not be prepared to take their views on local government reform from me. I don't much mind this being said, for I have the satisfaction of thinking that, to a great extent, present reformers have already been taking the principles on which to reform Local Government from me; and not only from me, but from Mr. Gladstone's Cabinet of 1869, of which I had the honour to be a member.

Now, what is the main point about Local Government?—And I entreat you, gentlemen, though you belong to a city so admirably governed as Edinburgh, don't for that reason believe that the subject of Local Government is not one of vital interest in which you ought to instruct your representatives to take a keen and active part. What we thought in that Cabinet of 1869 was, that while, in the towns much civic life prevailed, to the great advantage of the country, there was not the same civic life in rural districts, and that even in the smaller towns it did not exist to a degree such as was necessary for the development of its best features. Therefore we resolved, in the first place, to create a much greater interest in the elections which take place in all parts of the country for local purposes. We were not content that in these days no one should know in the country districts when any election is going on, or how guardians are smuggled into their offices, or how overseers and waywardens are appointed. These are mysteries to the present day, which are scarcely intelligible even to those who have studied Local Government; and as to the confusion existing in the payment of rates, I was able to illustrate the case by my own experience, by showing that, though possessing only a small property, situated however in two counties, I received eighty rating papers in the course of one year. There is a chaos of administration, a chaos of elections. Some people are elected upon one qualification, and others are elected upon other qualifications, and the result is, that no one takes any interest at all in local affairs in the country, except when there is any striking matter to be discussed; and my opinion was, that you ought to start with a unit not so large as to diminish the *personal* interest of the ratepayers in the affairs of their locality. For that reason I took the parish as the smallest unit, but if the parish was too small, a certain number of parishes were to be united. In every parish a representative authority

was to be created, headed by one man who was to be responsible for the affairs of that parish.

*The Parish.*

This proposal has been somewhat misrepresented. It was said at the time that I was going to revive the parish, and that was considered a crime. It is a crime to revive the parish, even in these days, when the chief references for political example begin to be made to the fifteenth century. Moreover, it was denied that the parish was an appropriate unit. But I did not try to *revive* the parish. It still existed, as it exists now. I only wished, while abolishing in the parish all unnecessary officials, to give parishes some little local life to enable them to form a living unit, which, by combination with other similar units, would lead up to larger units, to a larger circle, and from that up to the county. There were to be three different grades—the parish, then the aggregation of parishes, and, above the aggregation of parishes, a county authority was to be established. I was anxious to put aside, in this creation of local authority, anything that savoured of the Poor Law or of the Poor Law Union, because I wanted to build up local life, and to interest in that local life every citizen throughout the land, in the most distant and most agricultural parishes, apart from any idea of guardians, of poor law, or poorhouse, or anything that reminded him of what I shall always think one of the weakest parts of our social system. Gentlemen, I think it my duty to give these explanations, but I know it is a subject scarcely fitted for so large an audience as this. Only, let me add one more word. I never thought of creating a village autoerat, but only to arrange that there should be one man in every village who should be responsible, and to whom his fellow-citizens should look, and who, if anything went wrong, should be bound to take the initiative, remembering that often the want of initiative causes boards to fail where individuals succeed.

*Shortcomings  
of Local  
Authorities.*

Well, now let me put a few practical questions. I said in my Address that the improvement in Local Administration, and in Local Government and Finance, ought to be accompanied by the better administration of existing laws. Consider, if during the last thirty or forty years we had had a satisfactory local government throughout the country, what evils might have been prevented, and how questions now rising in terrible magnitude before us, might already have been dealt with, in an executive fashion, through representative institutions. Look at the enclosure, for instance, of common

land! If, in every parish or in every Union, you had had a proper local authority, why, that local authority would have seen that no illegal seizures of land had taken place at any time, and these questions would not be coming before us in their present form. Take, again, those great sanitary questions—the question of the Housing of the Poor. If, twenty or thirty years ago, we had had proper local authorities, what advances would have been made before now in this most important and most pressing matter! You will see that in some large towns where representative institutions have been in full vigour, the abuses have been diminished; but if the local authorities are not representative, and if they are weak, if they don't feel that they have the popular feeling behind them, they fail in grappling with those evils which came before the Commission for the Housing of the Poor, on which I had the honour to serve. We had plenty of evidence before that Commission to show that if the local authorities would only put existing laws in force, half the evils that exist now would have been abated long ago. But they have been remiss in many parts of the country, and see what is the result. That remissness has led to the desire that the State or the community should step in to do that which I hold to be the duty of the landlord himself. (Cheers and hisses.) Do I mark any sign of disapprobation?—(Cries of “No”)—because here I may join issue with a certain school, and it is an excellent instance of the difference of the attitude of some Liberals, and sound Liberals too, to that of other Liberals in such matters. Some say—“Look at the state of things—look at these houses unfit for human habitation. Pull down these houses; take the landlord by the throat, and make him do his duty.” The other school says—“Let us buy out the landlords; we are an excellent body for managing affairs; we will undertake the duty not only of buying this property, but of providing good houses at the expense of the rates. We will become land-owners and land-jobbers, and house-owners and house-jobbers, and we will step in to remedy the present state of things.” The former set reply—“No; you must take hold of the owners, and you must say to them, it is as bad to let houses which are unfit for human habitation as it is to sell putrid meat. We will not do your duty for you, but we will compel you to do your duty.” It is with this school, gentlemen, that I agree.

*Consequent  
Demand for  
State Interference.*

A curious instance was given before the Commission, of the

way in which they deal with these things in America. Some man owned property which he did not put into proper sanitary repair, and he had received notice once or twice to attend to it. He did not attend to these notices; so the local authority sent a gang of men in the night. They pulled down his house, and charged him with the expense in the morning. That, you see, gentlemen, is one way of dealing with the owners of unsanitary houses. But what I wish to contend for is this, that if some of us say we are against these measures which direct municipalities to take the housing of the poor into their own hands, it does not follow that we are indifferent to the housing of the poor, but that we consider the method of holding the individual responsible to be an equally good, and indeed a superior, method. You cannot say that a man is a reactionary Liberal because he does not look to the same remedy; nor can you say the reverse. It is a question of procedure which is open to argument between Liberals belonging to both schools.

*Disestablishment—*

Now, gentlemen, I have dealt with Local Government, the second point in Mr. Gladstone's programme. It is impossible to exhaust all these subjects in one speech without exhausting the audience; and I shall ask your permission to speak with reference to the Land on Saturday night. Nor do I think it necessary to detain you to-night with the subject of the Registration of Voters, the fourth point of the programme. I will proceed to matters which lie outside of the programme. And here, I find myself, of course, upon much more delicate ground, because if this ground were not more delicate, if the topics to which I am now going to refer were not somewhat more complicated, probably they would have been within Mr. Gladstone's programme. I come, gentlemen—you will anticipate it—to the question of the Scottish Church—the Disestablishment of the Church of Scotland. Of course you won't expect me thoroughly to understand every branch of the subject. I am sure, whatever I might say, no one would admit that I understood it, except I happened to agree with the precise opinions of the gentleman with whom I was arguing. So I must speak somewhat generally; and in the first place, I would repeat what I have said in my published Address, that I consider this a matter which ought to be treated according to the wants, the feelings, the requirements, and the history, of the people of Scotland. I should



not think it right, as an Englishman, to appeal to a Scottish constituency, if I were to import any English ideas on a matter so vitally concerning the interests of the people of Scotland. Thus I would wish to exclude any view of the effect that action in Scotland might have upon the Established Church in England. I should not attack the Scottish Church, on the ground that such a course would make it easier to attack the Established Church of England. Nor would I defend the Scottish Church with a view to the defence of the Church in England. It must be treated exclusively as a Scottish question.

In the next place, I should wish to recall that I was a convinced and ardent supporter of the disestablishment of the Church in Ireland.

With regard to the Church in England, I think, even without *In England.* understanding all the intricacies of the Churches of Scotland, I may say that we have intricacies in the case of English religious bodies also, and very difficult intricacies they are. The Church of England, and this is a point in which the circumstances in England are different from what they are in Scotland—the Church of England has been a bulwark against sacerdotalism, and a protection to the laity of the country. It is as a layman, and in the interests of the State in the case of England, and looking to a protection against the great increase of sacerdotal influence which would be inevitably involved if the English Church were separated from the State, that in England I am opposed, I frankly tell you, to Disestablishment. Won't you be tolerant to us Englishmen in regard to our Church, if we will be tolerant as regards the Church in Scotland? While I am frankly prepared to deal with the Scottish Church according to Scottish feelings, you will not, I think, take it amiss in me if, on the other hand, I look as an English layman at the question of the English Church. I shall not in any way allow this attitude to interfere—and my feelings in this respect shall not interfere—with my perfect freedom of mind with regard to the disestablishment of the Church of Scotland. With regard to the disestablishment of the Church of Scotland, I take up precisely the same ground as has been taken up by Lord Hartington and by Mr. Gladstone.

Let me only add one remark. I can see in the disestablishment *In Scotland.* of the Church of Scotland one possible great result which would be entirely absent in the case of the disestablishment of the Church of England, and that is the union of all the Presbyterian

Churches. (Some dissent.) I see that I am treading upon delicate ground. I thought that the fact that the Established Church was tied to the State, was the one great obstacle in the way of the union of the Presbyterian Churches. Well, it would be extremely difficult, I believe, to arrive at the views even of the present meeting upon this point, because it appears to me that they are divided. But I venture to say that I hold—whatever opinions there may be to the contrary—that so far as differences can be sunk, so far as Churches can be utilised for the benefit of all communities, so far as Christian unity can be promoted by the sinking of differences—so far, to work for their union, is, at all events, nothing that can be condemned as a tenet unworthy of a Presbyterian. You may consider it impossible. You are the judges, and not I. You may consider it undesirable, but it does appear to me that, perhaps, you have not here in Scotland that conflict with secularism which we have in other parts of the United Kingdom. Depend upon it, united Churches can struggle better against infidelity than Churches maintaining separate organizations. But I regret that I have raised this question of possible union. It was unnecessary for me to give any opinion upon it, because my action, as I have told you, will, on this question, be guided not by my own opinions, but by the wishes of the people of Scotland, and I do not wish to put my views unnecessarily forward on matters, which so nearly touch the religious feelings of many parts of this constituency.

*Dr. Cameron's  
Motion.*

But now, here is a point—a practical, a tangible point—which I wish to touch; and that is Dr. Cameron's motion, and the attitude that I ought to take up in regard to it. I have been asked, "Would you vote for Dr. Cameron's motion?" "Would you vote against it?" "If any motion for Disestablishment comes on in the next Parliament, what attitude would you take towards it?" You ask me to look forward a long way, if we are to have a Parliament lasting for five or six years; but I will deal with the question. Suppose you asked me to vote for Dr. Cameron's motion, and I were to say, yes. Well, what might happen? That I should find myself on that subject in a different lobby from the member for Midlothian. Mr. Gladstone has distinctly said that this is a question which ought not to be included in the programme. I pledge myself to do my utmost to ascertain the feelings of the people of Scotland by all avail-

able means upon this question, and that I shall be guided by that and by nothing else. ("Yes or No.") "Yes" or "No" as to what? ("Cameron's motion.") Well, then, I shall not vote for Dr. Cameron's motion, if the Government of the day do not support it. Why should I be asked to vote for Dr. Cameron's motion when the leader of the Liberal party says it is not a matter to be dealt with at the moment? Critics have complained of me that I have sometimes ventured to exercise my independent judgment. And here it is asked of me that I am to commit myself beforehand, to vote against what the leader of the party indicates. (A voice, "Your own convictions.") I have said I am going to vote according to the wishes of Scotland—the wishes of the people of Scotland; and in this I am going to follow Mr. Gladstone in the course he takes. Now, gentlemen, let me be exceedingly frank on this point. It is very possible that I may have pressure on the one side to go further, and declare that I will vote for the Disestablishment of the Church of Scotland. I shall not give such a pledge. On the other hand, I may be pressed by the Church party to pledge myself that I will oppose any motion for Disestablishment in the next Parliament. I shall not give such a pledge. That statement is the only one consistent with the position I take up, and intend to stand by, whether it costs me my election or not. I shall follow the views of the people of Scotland when their views are expressed.

Well, gentlemen, I am extremely sorry that this question forms, as it does, a point of difference between the various sections of the Liberal party in Scotland; I am sorry for it; but it is not a creation of the moment, and it will be for you to decide whether you will go forward, and exclude it from the test questions of the present election; or whether you will allow—"No, no, and interruption.") Well, the misfortune is that you cannot decide it at the poll, because, supposing that one-half of you vote against me because I am not prepared to vote for Dr. Cameron's motion, I shall not know whether that is the reason for your vote, or whether you have voted against me for the precisely opposite reason. Of course, I have no right to deprecate any hostility to me that may be felt in consequence of what I have said. But I don't see why there should be any more hostility shown to me in regard to this action on my part than to that of other leaders of the Liberal party, who have taken up precisely the same position.

*School Fees.*

I have detained you very long, gentlemen. Still, if I may further try your patience, I will deal with one or two further subjects. One of them is another delicate question. It is Free Education. (Slight cheers.) There was a subdued—only a subdued—cheer. I am not surprised that it was subdued—because most of you must be aware, that in the Manifesto considerable doubts are expressed with reference to free education. Now, I pointed out that it was no test of Liberalism whether you preferred to improve the housing of the poor by seizing the landlord by the throat and compelling him to do his duty, or by asking the community to do it for him. Similarly, on this question of Free Education, you will find that there are sound, strong Liberals on both sides.

As regards myself, from the beginning of my entrance into public life, and even before, I have thought that the question of Education was one of paramount importance in this country. I have not only laboured at education in Parliament and in the Cabinets of which I have been a member, but out of Parliament. I think it is now twenty years ago that I assisted in founding a school in London, which has since had a very great success, numbering about 1100 scholars, for the poorer middle class, where the fees were £4 a year. I have laboured, also, at extending opportunities for the continued education and cultivation of members of the working-classes, through movements in connection with our English Universities, which have carried the fine and solid teaching of University professors to crowded towns, and to large audiences of working men. Possibly some of you may have done me the honour of reading addresses I have delivered on the subject of Higher Education for the Working-classes. I aim not only at higher education on its own account. I have desired through improved technical education, improved education of every kind, to enable us to hold our own in the increasing competition of nations. I have also held that education—and who knows it better than Scotsmen?—that education is valuable for itself, for the increased happiness that it brings to the individual, for the light and life that it throws into his surroundings; and I have not been content to think that the education and the powers of cultivation of the working-classes should stop with the age of fourteen or fifteen, when they leave school. We have been anxious—a great many of us—that in the large towns they should have an opportunity in after life of having access to the best teaching which English training and Scottish

training can afford. I speak, therefore, as one who is deeply interested in education, and I will look at this question of Free Education only with one bias, and that is, how may we best serve the cause of education, how may we best interest the family, the pupil, and the teachers in this great common work? That is the point of view from which I look at this question. I am prepared to listen to arguments on either side, and according as it shall be proved to be best for education, and best for the performance of family duty, so shall my verdict be.

And I wish, first, to protest against the phrase that has been used, that school fees are an odious and an abominable tax. It may be that it may be wiser otherwise to distribute this cost, but I would not be a party to teach parents that it is an odious tax to pay for the education of their children. Where is the line to be drawn? Is it an odious tax to the thriving artizan?—(a voice, “He has no money,”)—an odious tax, I said, to the thriving artizans? Some artizans, I am glad to think, are thriving still. I am not prepared yet to approve the sort of picture which paints this country as if it had descended to a kind of pauper warren. I believe that we still have among us a large body of independent, thriving working men—independent, like other members of the community, and who would resent much of the patronage that is bestowed upon them. I want to draw a contrast as to this phrase “odious tax.” It is an “odious tax” on a thriving artizan; and is it not a tax, then, upon the poor widow in a somewhat higher social class, who can scarcely scrape together the fees to send her son to the school which she desires, but who does so from the instinct and the conviction that a mother owes something to her child? Is it not a tax upon the minister of the manse, who tries, with his family, to save sufficient money to send his son as a student to a Scottish University? Where are you to draw the line? I say again, let us examine this question, let us examine it from the point of view of what is best for education, and the best mode of distributing the charge; but don’t let us strike at duty by such a phrase as calling what has always been considered as one of the chief duties of parents—an odious and abominable tax.

Ay; but then it is said that the State compels you; and, therefore, as the State compels you to educate your child, the State ought to pay. Yes; and so when a child is vaccinated, as the State compels you to vaccinate your child, therefore it pays the

fees. That is the analogy which has been suggested. But there are other demands which the State makes, and with regard to which it exercises its compulsory powers, and where it does not pay. For instance, a parent is bound to feed his child, he is bound to clothe his child, and the State will punish those who neglect and starve their children, but the State does not, therefore, pay for the food or clothes. I strike at that argument; it is not a good one. There may be others that are better; but that is not a good argument. Will you accept that argument as regards the compulsory power of the State in other cases? If the State compels houseowners to keep their property in sanitary repair, is the State therefore to pay the cost? Certainly not. If the State requires wells to be kept in proper order, that the people may have proper drink, are the owners of these wells to be relieved by the State, and to be allowed to say, that as the State has issued its injunctions, let it pay the cost? It is a doctrine that strikes at the root of the obligations which rest upon individuals—sacred obligations which individuals ought to perform.

But, then, look at it from the point of view of the attendance at school. Upon that, opinions differ. I know there are many who hold that fees diminish the amount of the attendance at schools, but there are others who hold the reverse. I am inclined to think that amongst the latter I must include Mr. Gladstone, from the terms of his Manifesto. But if you were to examine people in the country, you would find that many consider that the fact of these fees being generally paid in advance causes the parents to wish not to lose the schooling for which they have paid at the beginning of the week. Having paid their pence, they say, "Let us have the value for the money." It is impossible, I admit, except upon the most rigorous examination, to arrive at an opinion on which side the truth may be. There may be many cases, or some cases, where the fees impede the attendance at school; and mind, I look upon attendance at school as a matter of primary importance. I am open to argument to see how the payment of fees operates in that respect. But I should regret if it should be proved that the fees are an impediment to attendance, and at this moment I am not prepared so to believe.

*Possible  
Consequences  
of Free  
Education.*

But let me put one more point before you: What will be the effect—it is a very important question—upon the quality of the education, and upon the competition of schools amongst

themselves, if you abolish fees? The class of schools just above the Board Schools must go. At present they hold their own, there being only a small difference between their own fees and the fees at Board Schools. Abolish the fees in the Board Schools and the difference will be too great, and you will lose the competition of the superior class of schools. I do not ask you, gentlemen, to accept these views; but I think you will acknowledge that it is a fair argument to place before you, and that these are not the arguments of reactionary Liberals, but that they may be the views, and, I contend, are the views, of men as deeply interested, and as deeply committed to the cause of education, as any of those who pledge themselves for free education. Do not let us mix up the question of the taxes. If the aggregate taxes on the working-classes are such that they cannot afford to pay these fees, it would be wise to look in other directions to relieve them, rather than to relieve them on this particular point—of the duty, that is, of paying for the education of their children. Again, in those countries where education is free, I should like to know whether the working-classes are not in most instances extremely heavily taxed; whether, in the taxation imposed upon them, they do not find a heavier burden than in those pence which they pay here for the education of their children. But, in any case, I entreat those who may differ from me, not to cast in my teeth that, if I cannot declare myself—and I cannot declare myself—in favour of free education, it is because I am one whit less anxious for the promotion of education amongst all classes of the community than any of those who are pledged to this new cause.

Gentlemen, it is clear that time would fail me to deal with any further topics which would require extensive treatment at my hands. Let me only say a few more words, in conclusion, with regard to the charge that is sometimes laid against those who are said to hold moderate Liberal opinions—that they are indolent and careless as to the progress and prosperity of all classes of the community. It would indeed be a charge against them if it could be proved, that, either by opposition or abstention from active effort, they stood aside from considering all measures of progress; but to catch at the first remedy which is suggested, is not a proof of sympathy for a patient. Sympathy with suffering does not compel you to think that the first medicine offered must be the correct one to effect a cure.

If you see remedies proposed which seem to strike at the patient's constitution, would it be right to be silent lest the particular physician who is prescribing at the moment should say that you have no care for the disease? I may be taunted that I am not so much in favour of experimental legislation as some others. I confess, I do not believe in statesmen bringing forward remedies as experiments, unless they have fairly satisfied themselves, and are convinced beforehand that they are remedies which will meet the disease. Was it as an experiment, think you, that Sir Robert Peel brought forward the abolition of the Corn-laws? Was it as an experiment that Cobden worked for Free-trade? No; it was from the deep conviction that these were the remedies which were necessary for the improvement of the condition of the people. (A voice, "For the middle classes.") With regard to experiments, I remember the case of a distinguished French surgeon who said that he had made the most delicate experiment in the world, and he had found that his diagnosis had been perfectly correct. A friend asked this distinguished surgeon what became of the patient, "Oh," he said, "he bled to death." I do not think it wise to try experiments upon the body politic of this country. I caught a phrase behind me—"Middle-class legislation"—as much as to say that it was the middle classes in whose interest Sir Robert Peel abolished the Corn-laws. I am grateful for the interruption. It reminds me of a point which I am anxious to bring out. This gentleman holds that the abolition of the Corn-laws was in favour of the middle-classes. In my opinion, if there has been one measure which has been to the advantage of the working-classes of this country, I take it to be that they have got cheap bread; and I am surprised, I must say, that in a Liberal audience there should be any who hold the opposite opinion. But what caught my ear was the word "middle-class." Gentlemen, don't let us conduct this election, don't let us conduct the campaigns that are coming, from the point of view that the interests of classes are divided, and that you must therefore look to the interests of one particular class. That is one of the most dangerous fallacies that can possibly be taught. There are some who seem to look upon the wealth of this country as if it were simply money contained in a cash-box, and that you can give the key either to one party or the other party, to one class or the other class, to help themselves from that cash-box. The wealth of this country is not a fixed



quantity. It is one that increases or diminishes according as there is wise and stable and just legislation. It would indeed be a disaster to the country if we should simply adopt the principle: "There is a certain fixed amount of wealth; all that is wanted is to distribute it differently," forgetting that we must endeavour so to legislate that the prosperity, wealth, and well-being of all classes may be promoted and increased. Are capital and labour hostile forces, or are they not rather partners in the same firm? You may wish that the profits should be more equally divided between them; that there should be great progress in the co-operative movement, and in the great shareholding co-operative companies which are now found in the centre and north of England. Profits are now being made more accessible to working men by many means, and this is a movement entirely in the right direction. The more you can democratise capital, the better, so bringing capital and labour nearer together. But using that same illustration of partners in the same firm, if we are to believe that in this country the union of the two is necessary, why throw discredit upon one or the other? Is it by endeavouring to denounce capital that you will promote the interests of labour? No. This country is not in a ring fence. We are not in such a position that we can arrange our industries, our manufactures, and our prosperity, simply by looking to ourselves. We are surrounded by competing rivals, by other countries who will watch for every mistake that we may make, who will gloat over anything that may separate the interests of capital and labour here, to the detriment of both, and to the detriment of labour as much as of capital. And let me not be told that this is a middle-class view. It is the view which the working-classes of this country, I believe, will hold as strongly as others, because they know that it is only by the union of classes that we can hope to maintain our past supremacy. I do not think it right, I confess, that the newly enfranchised classes should constantly be appealed to simply by suggestions to consider their own narrow pecuniary interests; nor do I believe it necessary that these electoral campaigns should all be conducted at a very high pitch of excitement. Russian Generals used to send their soldiers into battle plied with the strongest possible stimulants, in order that they might come up to the mark. That is not my idea of the electorate of this country. They will not require these intoxicating stimulants to induce them

to take an interest in public affairs. I do not think it necessary to galvanise them into action by a series of electric shocks. Appeals to their reason and appeals to their common-sense will succeed, if men will only still believe in the old British idea of independence, self-reliance, and common-sense. Let the old flag of British common-sense be firmly planted upon the ramparts of our Constitution, and let the latest recruits who have been taken into our political ranks be summoned to serve under its folds.

### III.

Delivered in the Music Hall in Edinburgh, on the  
10th October 1885.

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MR. GOSCHEN (after some preliminary observations) said—I reminded you on Wednesday, in the course of my speech, that at the same moment when I was addressing you Lord Salisbury was delivering himself of his expected Manifesto.

I spoke of the intense interest with which the utterances of the Prime Minister were awaited. I wanted to know, and the country wanted to know, the answer of Lord Salisbury to two or three questions which were being very earnestly put. One was this—What would be the attitude of Lord Salisbury and his party in reply to the menaces which the Irish party had put forth? and the other—a question also of deep importance—Would the Conservative party co-operate with the Liberals in such a reform of the procedure of Parliament as would make legislation possible? On the last point I find no single sentence in the speech of the Prime Minister. We do not know what the attitude of the Conservative party may be towards improving and strengthening the procedure of the House of Commons, which must form the first subject of interest for the next Parliament, if we are to be able to legislate at all. And then, as regards Ireland, no doubt Lord Salisbury spoke as became an English Minister—to whatever party he might belong—with regard to maintaining order and freedom in Ireland. But as regards satisfying Irish aspirations, as regards the solution of the great problems before him, I am reluctant to say that the impression which has been made upon me is that the answer of Lord Salisbury is not so clear and not so decisive, as I think the country might have had a right to expect. We heard nothing, it is true, with regard to the suggestion of some of his

colleagues, who had said, "Gentlemen of the United Kingdom, are you prepared to pay up for the loyalty of Ireland?" On that point there was absolute silence. But with regard to the ultimate answer to be given to Ireland, I do not think the speech of the Prime Minister was so satisfactory. And it is most important that we should be clear upon this point.

When I spoke last I said that a cloud of uncertainty still hung over the Irish policy of the Conservative Government. I think that cloud still hangs there as regards the future; for this is what Lord Salisbury said—he had been speaking of the Imperial Federation of the Colonies, and continued, "But with respect to Ireland, I am bound to say that I have never seen any plan or suggestion that will give me at present the slightest ground of anticipating that it is in that direction that we shall find any solution of the Irish problem. I wish it may be so, but I think I shall be holding out false expectations if we avow a belief which as yet, at all events, we cannot entertain." Now, I want to know what is the meaning of this "at present," and those words, "which as yet, at all events, we are not able to entertain." And remember this is in the direction of Federation. "I hope it may be so," says Lord Salisbury. Does Lord Salisbury hope that the solution of the Irish difficulty is to be found in the direction of Federation, and that Ireland is to that extent to be separated from the United Kingdom? I cannot gather the ideas of the Prime Minister from this oracular sentence.

*His Local  
Government  
Scheme.*

Then the noble Lord has spoken with regard to Local Government, and with regard to facilitating the Transfer of Land. And upon these subjects a large portion of the public have called his utterances extremely progressive and satisfactory.

But let us look at this point of his programme a little more closely. On the subject of Local Government, it is claimed that Lord Salisbury is closely following the Liberal lines. Some one said that surely his plans as to local government would satisfy men like myself. Well, they do not satisfy me. There is a great difference between us, and I wonder that public attention has not been more directed to the point. You will discover the cloven foot, in the programme of Lord Salisbury, rather on the subject of Local Finance than of Local Government Reform. You will find that he speaks of the burden of local taxation being borne according to the ability of every individual. Yes; but does not this

view ignore the hereditary burdens that have rested upon land? and does it not involve this result, that under the shadow of the ratepayers, the owners of land would be saved from those contributions under which, and subject to which, they have bought and sold and inherited their land? That is an old conflict between us of the Liberal party and the Conservatives. They have pointed to the burdens on land, which they have said ought to be lightened, because other property ought equally to pay; but so far the answer of the Liberal party has always been, that this argument might hold good as regards new burdens, but that, as regards the burdens of the past, land had always been subject to them, and that it would not be fair to take them off land and place them upon the community at large. Now, examine the difference of Lord Salisbury's manifesto in that respect with the declaration of Mr. Gladstone in his programme. Mr. Gladstone sees the point that must be kept in mind as to the hereditary burdens on land. Let us be perfectly fair. No doubt, land at this time has more difficulty in bearing these burdens than, perhaps, at any time of our previous history. Let the question be fairly and impartially examined, but do not let us start with the idea that the burdens of the past are not an element in the case, which every reformer of local finance is bound to take into consideration.

Well, then, there is another reform of Lord Salisbury's which he announced, and which has been taken up with some enthusiasm. He has suggested that corporate bodies, such as the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and trustees for various charitable purposes, should sell the land which they hold, in order thus to promote a larger distribution of land among the people. I cordially, very cordially, endorse that view; and all the more cordially because in 1874, now eleven years ago, I made a speech at Bristol in which I strongly urged this identical point. I thought that it was against the interests of this country that so large a portion of land should be locked up in the hands of corporate bodies. I thought that the sale of this land would be a matter of public usefulness, and it was my endeavour, when I was in office, to act upon this view; and I had the opportunity of selling land which belonged to corporations, and which had been locked up. Now, ten years afterwards, Lord Salisbury comes forward with his brand-new idea. But I think there is one great difference between my proposal and that of his lordship. My proposal was made when land was high, and when

*Sale of Land  
held by  
Corporate  
Bodies.*

it could be sold; and Lord Salisbury's is made at a time when land is low, and when nobody will buy it. Now, when the burdens upon landowners are so great that they scarcely know in what direction to turn—when that rise in the value of land is stopped, upon which corporations have so long flourished—Lord Salisbury says, "Let them sell." It is too late; and it is just in this way that so frequently the reforms of the Tory party come too late. In too many cases they are willing to sell when the hour for selling has almost gone by.

Gentlemen, on Wednesday I said, that I would speak to-night upon the question of Land; and though you are an urban audience, I think the interest now taken in the Land question throughout the length and breadth of the country is so great that you will expect me to explain my views upon it. And you will hold, I hope, with me—I ventured to hint at it the other night—that the various interests in this country are not so distinct but that the one set of interests reacts upon the other. Disasters to agriculture, uncertainty amongst landowners, bad crops, and unhappy farmers, mean also bad trade, curtailment of employment, and depression in many quarters apparently unconnected with land. Indeed, who shall say that this subject or that subject has no interest for a particular audience because it does not directly affect their pockets?

*Present  
Position of  
Land.*

Well now, what is the position of land? The situation of land has entirely changed during the last ten years. The position of farmers has changed, the position of landowners has changed, rents have had to be reduced, the profits of farmers have been curtailed enormously—in every branch of agriculture there is a want of hope and extreme depression. Wheat, to the advantage of the consumer, but to the detriment of the farmer, is extremely cheap. Wool is cheap, and sheep and oxen have fallen in price extremely. (Cries of "All the better.") Yes, if only mutton would fall in the same proportion. That the fall in agricultural produce should be so great, and that the consumer should have comparatively so little advantage from it—that is one of those things, to use a common phrase, "which no fellow can understand." But you know that agriculture has been depressed, and that the landowner is in a very difficult position. Now, at some meeting not very long ago, some orator belonging to the advanced school, I think—(a voice, "Chamberlain")—seemed to

have got the head of the landowners "in Chancery," if I may say so, and was pounding away at them, and there was a cry from one of the audience, who enjoyed the performance, "Go at 'em." Well, unfortunately, it was neither the orator nor the school to which he belonged, who had had the first turn at the landlords, because bad crops had had their turn at them already. The competition of the foreigners had had a turn at them already, and the position of the landowners at present is certainly not an enviable one. Much property has been bought and sold to pay about 3 per cent., and if there is a reduction of 25 per cent. in the rents off that 3 per cent., I leave it to the arithmetical talent of a Scottish audience to decide what the remainder will be. But this is not the whole case. If there is a fall in the landowner's rent, it does not come off the whole of the rent, but it comes off that portion which is reserved to himself. For instance, if a man receives £5000 a-year in rents, and he has charges on the estate, payments to relations and others, of £2500, these must go on, and the fall of 25 per cent. on the whole becomes a fall of 50 per cent. upon the £2500 which comes to himself. And more than that, the out-goings must remain the same, for he must endeavour still to do his duty to the land; still to go on with his repairs; still to go on with building cottages where they are wanted; still to go on with draining where land requires to be drained.

That is a difficult position; it is a position which deserves the sympathy of the community; and more than that, it is interesting to the community, because it cannot be to its advantage that through the want of capital, either on the part of farmer or landowner, large tracts should go out of cultivation, or into second-rate and bad cultivation. It is most important that the landowners should still be induced to put their hands into their pockets, even if funds are running low, in order to do justice to the land; and it would be an unfortunate policy by any proceedings so to shake the confidence of the landowners that they should fold their arms and say, "The seasons are too bad, competition is too great, the uncertainty of my tenure is too great, for it to be right for me to go on spending money on my land." That is not a position into which it would be wise that the landowners should be forced. Under these circumstances, for my part, I cordially endorse and sympathise with, and have always sympathised

*Need of  
Facilitating  
Transfer.*

with, every facility being given to the landlords to sell; and every step that would quicken the transfer of land, the cheap transfer of land, and that would prevent the locking up of land under primogeniture and entail, would have my most cordial co-operation.

Some people say that the abolition of primogeniture and entail would not have a very great effect. Well, I do not know how that may be. That remark applies, however, more especially to England. I am told that in Scotland there are limitations to the power of bequest—to the free powers of testators—which do not exist in England, and that part of what in England we call personal property must, by law, go in certain defined proportions to the heirs and to the widow of the testator. Now, supposing that land were put on the same footing as personal property in that respect, would not such a step have a tremendous effect in breaking up the very large estates? I do not wish to embark in the intricacies of the law, which are as great as the intricacies of some other interesting subjects into which I ventured to put my foot on Wednesday. But I do hold that the abolition of primogeniture and entail would have a very considerable effect in this direction; and at all events it will be done. The time has come when it must be done, and it will be the duty of the next Parliament to do it.

One word with regard to the cheaper transfer of Land. Nothing can be more important, not only in the interest of landed property, but in the interest of house property, than that it should be possible to transfer it quickly and cheaply, and that no impediments should stand in the way of men acquiring property in land or houses. I have long since advocated a system of easy registry. Since I addressed an Edinburgh audience last winter, I have learned from personal inquiry and through the kindness of some of my friends, that in Edinburgh—and in Scotland generally—there is a compulsory system of registration, which acts, so far as it goes, with comparative smoothness; but still, if more can be done in cheapening transfer still further, either by the reduction of the stamp duties on the smaller properties, or by the reduction, if it be possible, of other charges, that I won't specifically name, I consider that a great object will have been gained.

Lord Salisbury says that there are no squires who would not be glad to have cheap lawyers' bills. That may be so now, but, mind



you, it has not been always the view of the Tory party that it was desirable that land transfer should be cheap. The old view was that it was desirable to prevent the dispersion of land in order to keep together the great estates of the territorial aristocracy. Now, wisely, that view has been abandoned, and the Conservatives hold—as I believe every sensible man now must hold—that the dispersion of landed property and house property amongst a much larger number of the population would tend to the advantage of the community at large. And so I hope that all may be agreed to go forward in the direction of endeavouring to multiply the number of the holders of house property and of landed property.

I have gone myself so far as to say that, even if the produce of land under a system of smaller holdings were less, nevertheless the social advantages of the greater distribution of land amongst the population would outweigh the economic disadvantage of the smaller returns from the land. I have received remonstrances upon this point. I have had remonstrances from people who have studied the system in France, and who have told me that if I could see the poverty, the misery, which these very small holdings in France brought with them—the infanticide and other evils—I should change my views. Well, these are serious questions, but, for my part, though the letters I received were striking, they did not convince me, because I believe that, even in the extreme poverty of the working-classes of this country, they do not hold, taught by their various Churches as they have been, the tenets of the French peasantry upon some of these painful subjects. And for my part I say I am not frightened to go forward with the multiplication of small holdings, even though it be true that the aggregate produce may be less. So let us be agreed upon this point before we possibly part company at another stage—that it is for the advantage of the community to increase the number of the holders and the tillers of the soil.

*Multiplication  
of Small  
Holdings  
desirable,*

Now, how shall it be done? I am not one of those who believe that this matter can be forced; I am not one of those who believe that by substituting artificial means for natural influences you will be able to force such a system upon any part of the United Kingdom. I hope you will allow me shortly to argue the principles underlying the Allotment question in the same spirit in which I ventured to argue the question of Free Education on Wednesday night; that is to say, to put the argument fairly

*But not  
through Local  
Authorities.*

before you without wishing to dogmatise in any way whatever. The proposal that is made is this—and mind, it is made almost with a kind of suggestion that unless one accepts that particular proposal it is impossible to be a sound Liberal, though to that I demur entirely—the proposal is this, that municipalities should have the power of purchasing land compulsorily at a fair value, and then of letting it out in allotments to the working-classes. Now, I am entirely in favour—remember my words—I am in favour of the system of allotments, and I rejoice to think that under the influence of public opinion, under the advancing views of the day, great progress is at this moment being made with the whole system of allotments. But let me put a practical case before you of which I heard the other day. A landlord wishes, and is carrying out his wishes with determination, to give 100 labourers an acre or half-an-acre holding. What does he do? He breaks up a field—in this case of 26 acres—and it costs him £3, 15s. per acre for the acts of husbandry necessary to make the allotments. Besides that, he has to spend £25 or £35 for barns; he has to erect fences, and to conduct a number of other similar operations; and in the result he charges £1 per acre, which gives scarcely any percentage whatever upon the outlay that he has incurred. Now, fancy this being done by a municipal authority! Suppose they buy the land. Then comes the surveyor, then comes the inspector, then comes a discussion as to the kind of barns that should be erected, then comes the erection of the fences, and then comes the selection of the men for the allotments; and when all this has been done, what rent is to be fixed? Is it to be a rent which will charge on the community the difference between the expense of the outlay and that which the tenant can fairly pay? Is that difference to be borne by the whole body of ratepayers, including those who have no particular interest in the allotments? I want to know, if the work cannot be done gratis, from whose pockets is it to come? Let us, if we possibly can, pursue the system of allotments; but when we come to details, let us know what we are about.

Well, then, the municipality is to take the land—to take it from the owner. Ay; but supposing the owner is not in occupation. Supposing it is the farmer who is occupying the frontage which is to be taken; supposing there are fields which fall in with the general rotation of his crops. Are these to be taken

without compensation to him for the deterioration, the necessary deterioration, which his farm will suffer? There is not a single man in this hall who would not say that the farmer was entitled to compensation under such circumstances. You may say that the owner is not entitled—few, I hope, would say that—but the farmer distinctly would be entitled to compensation. What position would he be in if the local authority were to come and break up his farm without compensation to him for the injury which he would suffer?

But then there comes this further point,—I call your attention to it, because it bears on so many of these various projects. It is this. They say, “What harm will come of it if it is not successful? Give the municipality powers. Let us try the experiment. What harm will it do if they do not let these allotments?” I tell you what harm it will do. It will discourage the landlords, who, at the same time, might themselves be promoting this system of allotment; it will discourage the farmers who, having property on hand, will not know at any time whether the municipal authority may not come and take it away. And landlord and farmer will say, “How can we work these fields, how can we put capital into these fields any more, how can we employ agricultural labourers on these fields, if at any moment we are likely to have them taken away at a so-called fair value by the municipal authority?”

Now do me the justice to believe that I do not wish to deal with this matter in any other way than to promote the object that we have at heart. But I take leave to say that it is not fair on the part of any school of politicians to assert that because a man does not accept such proposals as these, before they are examined and before they are thrashed out, therefore he is an indifferent or a cold Liberal. I protested on Wednesday that there might be good Liberals who were opposed to free education, and good Liberals who were in its favour. I protest to-night that, as there may be good Liberals in favour of the system of allotments in the form suggested, so there are equally good stout Liberals against these proposals. And amongst those stout Liberals who would be opposed to them, I wish we had at this moment still in our midst a man whose premature death was an incalculable loss to the community—I mean the late Professor Fawcett—a man whose head was as strong as his heart was sound—and who was consumed with

a burning desire for the welfare of the working-classes. You should have seen Professor Fawcett standing before an audience of working men—you should have seen the man, with a brave heart and a strong intellect, facing a crowd and telling them stern truths. He was a man, as I say, whose death has been an irreparable loss to this country.

*Municipal  
Socialism  
and its  
Friends.*

But it is sometimes said that those who are opposed to this new system of municipal socialism are the weak men, and that its advocates are the strong men. Now I should like to know why it is a sign of strength to rely upon a corporate body to do certain duties, rather than to rely upon the individual himself to do them. I should like to know what there is in this system which so entitles it to the credit of being "advanced." I do not know how far it is a point in their favour, but as a matter of fact these new views recommend themselves very considerably to the approbation of Prince Bismarck. The Iron Chancellor likes these ways well. He likes regulation; he likes that regulation of labour, and that interference in many branches of industrial life, which are involved in all these schemes of socialism—whether municipal socialism, whether State socialism, or any other kind of socialism. But the National Liberals of Germany, the great Liberal party in Germany, are opposed to this socialism, as striking at the freedom of the working-classes of their country. They see that this patronage and these paternal ways have indeed the approval of a certain class of socialists, also of the Roman Catholics, also of the despotic forces of the country; but they do not command the approval of the independent labouring men in the country at large. It is interesting to remark that Lord Randolph Churchill has quoted Prince Bismarck as an authority, and that a very distinguished leader of the Liberal party has also quoted him as an authority, in respect of changes which might be introduced in our system of taxation. For my part, I am against Bismarckian socialism, and I am against Napoleonic expenditure. I know the new Radical programme bids us abandon the old economic doctrines as regards expenditure. The taxes are to be merrily spent, provided they are only put upon new shoulders. That is the modern doctrine; but if this country is going forward in the direction of Napoleonic expenditure and Bismarckian finance, well, all I can say is, that it may be a wise, a progressive, and an advanced proceeding, but I do not call it truly Liberal; nor do I

admit that a man can be denounced as a weak Liberal because he does not agree with it.

Again, take the question of respect for Property. It is supposed that a man holds advanced views if he is not particular about the rights of property, but that one is "unsound" if one is particular. Well, but that view is not general in what one may call democratic countries. In many democratic countries the sanctity of the proprietary rights of individuals is considered to lie at the very foundations of society; and it would be a strange thing indeed if in this country at this day we should have to go to the United States for precedents as regards the protection of property. The fact is, that the Constitution of the United States offers extraordinary guarantees against any compulsory transfer of property, by any legislative power, from one individual to another. The laws are perfectly clear with regard to expropriation for public purposes; but as for transfer from one individual to another, even though it should be considered as a social good—if a law sanctioning a compulsory measure for that purpose were passed by the Legislature of any State in America, it would be quashed by the Supreme Court. Again, I say, I do not wish to dogmatise. But if that is the view in the United States—a democratic country as we have always till lately regarded it—I do not think that Liberals who are tender with regard to such points can be denounced as laggard Liberals on that account.

Now, I trust that I have established that if there are differences amongst us—and there are—they are differences of opinion amongst men working forward for the same object, wishing to deal with the same social problems; wishing alike to lift the condition of the masses; wishing alike to promote the prosperity of the country at large; and that we shall not be denounced—those of us who sometimes exercise our privilege of criticism—we shall not be denounced as indifferent to the welfare of the masses because we look these problems in the face. To go back for one moment to proposals that seem scarcely adequate to meet the object they have in view—such a proposal, for instance, as the proposal for increasing allotments through the action of municipalities—if you create expectations by them, which expectations you cannot fulfil, I say you are doing damage to the State. It has been suggested that, by this system of allotments, you might so raise the whole status of the working-classes as effectually to deal with pauperism. I wish it were so.

*Democratic  
Respect for  
Rights of  
Property.*

*Exaggerated  
Expectations.*

But, it may be said, you are not fair in arguing that it has actually been said. No, but it has been implied. You have seen men pointing to the hideous mass of pauperism which exists; you have seen them pointing to our system of land tenure on the other side, and suggesting a close connection between the two. Well, there are other countries where the land tenure differs *in toto* from that which exists here, but which are not exempt from that fearful distress which rests on a portion of the inhabitants of these islands. You see this pauperism elsewhere, where the land tenure is different. It was my fate at one time to be President of the Poor-law Board, and I made it my business then to examine and to probe to the bottom as far as I could this most sorrowful subject of pauperism, to gauge its causes and to look into its extent. When men talk of there being three-quarters of a million or a million of paupers, they speak as if they were so many men or women out of work, as if they were men who ought to be employed, and women who ought to be employed, but who, unfortunately, cannot get employment; and their non-employment is laid at the door of our social system as a blot. I do not know how it is here; but I can tell you that there are workhouses in London containing one thousand or two thousand inmates, in which there are not forty able-bodied men or women—in which there are not one hundred who come from what may be called the working-classes of this country. It is not the working men from the towns, whether they are in employment or out of employment, who mostly fill our workhouses, and who swell those fearful rolls of pauperism. (A voice, "Who are they?") You want to know who they are. I will tell you who they are. (A voice, "Free education.") Yes, I agree education may do much. (Another voice, "Whisky.") I am not sorry for these interruptions, because you will see that you are exactly upon the same lines as I am. I heard in one part of this room the word "whisky," and I heard in another part of the room the word "education." I was going to say—and I will say it now—that I believe if Sir Wilfrid Lawson's movement were capable of being carried to the end, it would do more to empty our workhouses than all the schemes of Mr. Jesse Collings. Sir Wilfrid Lawson's scheme may be Utopian, but depend upon it—and I will answer the question of the elector in one moment—it is by temperance, by education,

and by religion, that you will do more to reduce this hideous state of things in parts of our great cities than by any system of municipal socialism.

Who are these paupers, did you ask? They are, if I may use *Breakages of Civilisation.* so sad a word—they are the breakages of civilisation; they are men with broken hearts and broken fortunes, coming from all classes of society. If you were to look into the registers, you would find there not only working men. No; you would find paupers who have come from a different class. You would find some of them to be tradesmen; you would find some to be educated men; you would find men who had been broken down in life; you would find there the innocent victims of crime; you would find the children of criminals and the children of shame. It is a tale that ought sometimes to be told, but which is not a cheerful one to have to tell. It is the waifs and strays of the vast Metropolis who are there gathered together. Men marry at an early age, perhaps on good wages. They have six or seven children during the first eight years of their marriage. The man dies, and the widow and children are reduced immediately to pauperism, and at once go to swell that ghastly list. I know of no laws by which you can arrest that state of things; I know of no system of division of land, or of the distribution of wealth; I know no means by which you can check such a state of things, except by doing all in your power to raise the self-esteem of the population; and to develop that feeling of charity, that feeling of independence, that family feeling, which would make men and women turn rather to their kith and kin, than to the favours of any municipal corporation. It is thus that we will endeavour to fight this foe, not this advancing foe of pauperism, because pauperism is retreating, but to fight this foe to the death. I admit there is business here for the Legislature, but there is business, too, for every citizen—for the clergyman, for the reformer, for the minister, for every man who cares for his country.

Gentlemen, I said on Wednesday that those took a false view of the prosperity of this country who held it to be a fixed prosperity, and who held that there was a certain quantity to be distributed, and that the chief consideration was how to distribute it, rather than how to increase it. Let me use another simile with regard to this point, to show you what I mean. It is not only im-

*Depression of Trade.*

portant to think of the distribution of a crop when it has been grown, or of what it will fetch. You must consider first and foremost how you may produce the largest crop for the benefit of all. Thus I conceive that those men are wrong who are concentrating their attention simply on the existence of a certain amount of wealth, without looking at the same time to the causes which affect the aggregate product. No inquiry is in itself more proper than for every statesman to consider what are the reasons why trade is now depressed, and why there is that general feeling of discomfort amongst the industrial interests, the trading and manufacturing interests.

*Objections to the Commission.*

I know what will be in some of your minds; you want to ask me why I did not serve upon the Commission appointed to inquire into the depression of trade? Well, I will tell you. I have not said anything about it in public before, though we have been much attacked upon the subject. The Commission has been appointed, a number of honourable and clever men are serving upon it, and I did not wish to say anything against it. But those of us who were asked to serve, and declined, have been somewhat severely handled by Conservative speakers, as if it were from party spirit that we had refused. I can assure every one in this hall that, speaking for myself, the idea of party could not enter into my mind; and it is ridiculous to think that it did. Most men would have been perfectly content to sit and serve with Lord Iddlesleigh, who is a very reasonable man; and I only wish he had not spoken of Fair Trade as a "pious opinion." But why did we—I will not say we, I will speak for myself only—why did I refuse? Because I did not believe that the Royal Commission would do any good—and I have had some experience of Commissions. Commissions are very excellent things to inquire into certain definite points involving much detail, but when you come to inquire into economic first principles, then I confess I have very little confidence in a Commission constructed on the principle of balancing a number of interests, and selecting men who have given attention to this or that particular point, but not necessarily to the main points that may come before that Commission. And then if you knew the paradise that a Royal Commission is to all the faddists and fanatics in the kingdom, you would understand how some men may be reluctant to have anything to do with it. I do not mean that there are such on



this Commission ; but, as a rule, if there is a man who has been for years going about with a theory in his pocket, who has tried to button-hole all his friends, who has bored you at the club, from whom you have been scarcely able to escape, that man, as sure as anything, will come before you as an early witness in the Royal Commission. The orthodox men do not care to come, because they think there is a great deal of nonsense about the whole thing. But the man who has got a particular theory of his own that he cannot persuade his friends to accept still thinks he will get the members of a Royal Commission to accept it ; and so the waste of time is fearful. But there is something worse than that. These Commissions lift fads and crotchets much too much into the same kind of prominence as those first principles of economy which have been accepted almost by all schools. Then there is the drawing of the report. Nobody agrees with anybody else. How is it possible upon a Commission that is going to inquire into silver, into foreign competition, into Fair Trade, into Bank Acts, into every industry in every town in the United Kingdom, including England, Scotland, and Ireland,—that is going to examine not only the industries in this country, but all the industries in every other country, the wages in every European country, and so on,—to produce a report within any reasonable period? You ask, when will it do so? Well, not while the Conservatives are in office. I won't detain you on this point any further ; but I could show, and will show if I have the opportunity on other occasions, what I believe to be the mischief of this Royal Commission, apart from some of those difficulties which I have enumerated.

And now, gentlemen, you have given me, as you gave me on Wednesday last, a most patient and indulgent hearing. But before I sit down I wish to take a bull by the horns. Many questions have been put into my hands, and into the hands of the chairman, some of which I will deal with when they are put to me ; but on one I will say a word in this address. It is the question, whether I do not think that I was wrong in having opposed the bill for the extension of the franchise to the agricultural labourer. I am asked whether I do not think I was wrong. I wonder why that question is put. I wonder whether it is put to elicit information, or whether it is put to have a kind of controversial effect upon those who hear me. But

let me plainly say that, if those who framed this question think that they will see me on this platform fumbling for excuses or mumbling apologies—(cheers, with some hisses)—would you respect me more if I were to mumble apologies, I wonder?—I say that if they expected that, they do not know their man. I have said in the face of an audience in this town, I have said in my place in Parliament, that I will do my utmost to assist in falsifying my own predictions. I have said that I will do my utmost—accepting the situation to the full—to serve my country in the new circumstances in which it is placed. It is well known that one of my main reasons for acting as I did was my view that the agricultural labourer had not had that preparation through civic life which his fellow-labourers and artizans in the towns had enjoyed. Well, I say that through the views I take on Local Government, and through the efforts which I will make, and which I trust I shall be allowed to make in concert with my party, for the reform of Local Government,—that civic education will now be given him at the same time that he will be exercising the franchise. But if there are men here in this room who think that I ought to have recanted, I say not only that they are mistaken, but that it is less disparaging to the working-classes to tell them straight out what you mean;—to tell them what you think can be done, and what you think can not be done;—to spare them the spectacle of men making impossible promises; to spare them the spectacle of men standing on platforms and indulging in Utopian dreams—I say that that is a fairer attitude to take to the enfranchised classes in this country than to lead them to believe that there is no demand that they can make upon you that you will not be willing to comply with. To those who dissent from that view—to those who dissent from the attitude that I take up, to those who think that in this I do not fairly go forward, I say, Give other men, then, your votes, but give me your respect. Responsible men in the party have, I believe, made use of the expression that, if I could not honourably swim with the stream, I ought to stand aside. I shall not stand aside. I shall not stand aside so long as there is a group of my countrymen who are willing to accept my services in the State. I shall not stand aside; and, at this time of the nation's history, they would indeed be craven skulkers who would be prepared to take their places amongst the non-combatants. I shall not stand aside, and I shall not take

“*Quit ye  
like Men.*”

as my motto, "Swim with the stream." That is not my ideal of perfect statesmanship. There is another phrase that I should prefer, a phrase of more ancient origin and of higher authority. It is, "Quit ye like men."

## IV.

Delivered at Haddington on the 13th October 1885.

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*Mr. Haldane's  
Candidature.*

Mr. GOSCHEN said—The Marquis of Tweeddale has introduced my name to you in very kind terms; but my errand here to-night is not personal in any way. It is to advocate the Liberal cause. I stand here to ask you to return Mr. Haldane to be the representative of this constituency. I see that in this meeting, as in others which I have addressed, we have the good fortune, which does not always fall to the lot of political speakers, not only to discharge the tame duty of speaking to those who agree with us, but the more exhilarating duty of speaking to a miscellaneous audience. It is easy, in these electioneering times, to rouse one's own friends to enthusiasm; but there is a duty at least as important, and that is to bring home to one's political adversaries, or to the neutral body in the various constituencies, the truths which we hold to be right, and the doctrines for which we claim support. And so I assume here that I am not only speaking to Liberals, but that I am speaking to a representative Scottish audience, taking a deep interest in the many questions which are now to be decided by the electorate at large.

I envy Mr. Haldane one point in his candidature. He has the advantage of being opposed by a Conservative candidate. He has not to fight front and rear. He has to face as his political opponents only those who are the opponents of the party to which he belongs. There are no cross issues here; and I hope that we may assume that this contest in East Lothian will not be a mere personal contest between two honourable gentlemen, but that it will be a contest between two political parties, fairly waged.

I have read, and read with some amusement, the speeches which have been made by the young and able candidate who

is opposed to Mr. Haldane in this constituency. Lord Elcho made some observations with regard to the supporters whom Mr. Haldane has asked to assist him in this contest; he has likened Mr. Broadhurst and myself to two big guns, one of which had been placed at one side of the camp and the other at another, but which were so situated that they fired rather more into one another than into the common enemy. I will oblige Lord Elcho, and I will endeavour to lower my gun; I will endeavour not to fire over the head of the enemy, but to get his range this evening. We are asked—a great many of us who are not ashamed of the name of moderate Liberals—we are summoned to assist the Conservatives on this present occasion, and I would ask your attention this evening to consider the grounds on which that appeal—that futile appeal—is made. Lord Salisbury has issued a programme which is exceedingly sober for him; Lord Randolph Churchill has issued a manifesto, in which there appear the words “common-sense” and “political economy;” and on the ground of these documents, but especially on the ground of the manifesto of Lord Salisbury, we are invited to join in the statesmanlike proposals of the present Prime Minister. Now, I intend to ask your attention to some points of Lord Salisbury’s programme; but I wish to know, before I go to them, whether, supposing his present programme were entirely satisfactory, whether, even if it were nearly equal to the programme put forward in the Manifesto of our own Leader, we should therefore be bound to prefer the programme of the later convert to the programme of the author of so many reforms. It has happened to me when I have travelled abroad, that foreign friends have most hospitably tried to make me at home by offering me English fare; and, with the best intentions in the world, have produced a plum-pudding, according to a strictly orthodox English recipe. The plum-pudding was made according to the recipe, possibly of the right ingredients, but it did not have the flavour which it would have had had it been made by an orthodox English cook; and so it appears to me that Liberal reforms, even though dressed with a Conservative sauce, will not have the same flavour, and will not be so satisfactory to the Liberal party, as if they had been prepared where they ought to be prepared, in the proper Liberal kitchen. I say frankly, it is not enough to have our own reforms offered to us by our opponents. But how far is it a fact that the programme which is offered to us by our opponents is so

*Conservative  
Appeal to  
Moderate  
Liberals,*

*Why to be  
rejected.*

satisfactory as some at first sight wish to make out? I acknowledge that in Lord Salisbury's programme there are sentiments nobly expressed, with which I cordially agree, with regard to Imperial Federation; but these are the views which were expressed long before Lord Salisbury's manifesto by Mr. Forster and our Scottish friend Lord Rosebery. Then we hear proposals for the sale of land belonging to ecclesiastical and other corporations, which only have the defect, as I said at Edinburgh a few nights ago, that they come so late that it may be almost impossible to give effect to them. Then you have the proposal for the reform of Local Government, which would, however, probably embody a particular kind of local financial reform, for years advocated in the House of Commons by Sir Massey Lopes, but which has continually been resisted by Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues in the Liberal Government. Therefore I confess I do not see that this document is one which is likely to seduce Liberals from their allegiance to their own leaders, and from the principles which they have hitherto advocated.

But supposing this document were entirely satisfactory, would it be right on that account immediately to accept the invitation which has been addressed to us by many organs of Conservative opinion? There is a kind of irritation in the Conservative press. They say, "What more can you want? Here is a most sober programme; why don't you at once declare your adherence to it?" Before I do so I wish to consider the past of the Conservative leaders,—I wish to consider the past of the Conservative party; I wish to consider all the various methods which they seem to have followed. And I confess, whether I look to the past or to the present, I see nothing much to encourage any one of us to give that kind of support which is now asked at our hands. In what way are we to look on the tone and temper of those who now offer us what is called a sober and statesmanlike programme? I want to know, can it be claimed that you may indulge for a certain number of years in any vagaries, and then that the first moment you put forward a sober document, it ought to be accepted with absolute confidence? I would ask, supposing some of our own most advanced leaders put forward high Utopian views which are absolutely impossible of execution, and then tone them down and minimise them into certain practical proposals, can we entirely forget what has gone before? You cannot judge by a single docu-

ment, nor by a single proposal. You must look at the tone of thought; you must look at past actions; you must look at the whole of the circumstances by which the men whom you are judging have been surrounded, and at the temptations to which they have been exposed, and see how they have resisted these temptations. And only when you have done all this, will you be able to gauge what is the true temper and tone of a political party.

Now, our Conservative friends talk a good deal of our want of union. Well, I do not know to what extent I may assume that those who are listening to me have read contemporary newspapers, but for my part I remember that it is not so many months ago that even the Conservative press was filled with every kind of letter, from Conservatives themselves, showing the utter disorganization of their party, and the degree to which they had lost confidence almost in every leader whom they possessed. There were letters from Conservative agents, throwing up their appointments because they no longer saw their way; and later on there were refusals in large towns to attend at political banquets—because it was impossible for the steady Conservatives to accept the latest development of Tory democracy. And these are the men who now, pointing to differences among Liberals, say that, on their account, Liberals ought to rally to a cause which its own agents have lately denounced!

But let us look more closely at the titles which they attempt to establish to the confidence of men who do not belong to their own political ranks. I wonder whether people still remember the events of 1867, when a certain number of men, who were afraid of the proposals which had been made by Mr. Gladstone's Cabinet at that time, denounced his Reform Bill, and, in conjunction with the Conservatives, ultimately defeated and turned out Lord Russell's Ministry. What happened immediately afterwards? The Conservatives brought in a bill which went much further than Lord Russell's bill, and entirely threw over all the men by whose assistance they had managed to defeat his Government. History repeats itself—and I am bound to say—I regret to say it—but it seems to me that the Conservative party at this day rather resembles a rival eleven challenging the eleven which is playing on behalf of the Liberals, than a great party with principles of its own.

As a similar instance, let me, with your permission, put before you what happened in the case of the late Budget. Mr.

*Their  
Attitude to  
the Budget.*

Gladstone's Government, on the eve of a general election, when it was extremely critical and difficult to propose taxes to pay for what had been an unpopular expedition, had stood by their principles to this extent, that they determined that all classes of the community should contribute to the expenses. It would have been almost criminal in any administration, just before a great constitutional change, such as that in which we find ourselves at present, not to have acted on the principle that sacrifices should be shared by every class in the community. They thought that, having greatly extended the representation, the old doctrine of taxation and representation going together should be maintained nevertheless, and that, while by a large increase in the Income-tax they would tax the wealthy, by a very moderate increase in the spirit duties they would ask the working-classes to do their part in raising the funds which were necessary in the circumstances. They were not afraid to face the electorate with an appeal that all classes should bear a share of the burden. And this was not only a patriotic, but it was a sound, and an eminently Conservative, appeal. How was it met? The Conservatives might have taken this ground—they might have objected to the increase in taxation being only put upon the class which consumed alcoholic drinks; they might have said—it would have been a Conservative and a rational view to take—"You ought to spread this charge over a greater surface." But what did they do? They saw an election in prospect, and they raised the cry, "You have taxed the poor man's beer and whisky; you have not taxed the rich man's wine." The rich man's wine had not been taxed, but the rich man's income had been taxed by a very heavy addition to the Income-tax. The wine-drinking class had been made to pay its share, and therefore it was a false and unjust argument to raise this class prejudice in reply to the Government proposal, and to cry out that the Government had spared the rich while they had taxed the poor. It was an electioneering objection taken at a moment when it eminently behoved the Conservative party to join in the declaration, "It is right that all classes should contribute to the national need."

And then, what happened in the House of Commons? This Budget was proposed, and Sir Michael Hicks Beach got up and made a very rational speech, in which he pointed out some objections to the Budget, and then—entirely accepting the view that taxation to a slight extent should be put upon all classes



of the community—mentioned the tea-duty as a duty that might fairly be imposed. But no! One of his colleagues saw that electoral capital would be made out of this suggestion, and immediately sprang up and threw over Sir Michael Hicks Beach, rebuking him for making what was an eminently Conservative proposal. It was thus that these gentlemen who claim to be so Conservative attempted to catch the popular breeze. The result has been, as was declared in a speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer himself, that, through the fear of both parties to raise taxes before the election, on the principle that all should contribute to the common need, a heavier blow has been struck at indirect taxation than has been struck during all the previous years of our political history. And for this I hold that party, in great measure, responsible, who ought to have felt, if they had been true to the instincts and the traditions of their past, that the moment was one in which they ought to have interposed on the side of orthodox finance; and that the country would respect them more, if they stood by the doctrines which they had always upheld, than if before an election they yielded to the desire for popularity. I must frankly say, I have sat in front of the Conservatives for many a year, and I have not been inspired, by anything I have seen, with any confidence in Conservative finance.

You will observe that, in the programme put forward by Lord Salisbury, upon the strength of which it is assumed that a portion of the Liberal party ought to support him, very little indeed is said with regard to finance. But, let me ask, what would be the Conservative view as regards matters equally important, perhaps more important even, to the community than finance—economic doctrines? What is their attitude towards Free Trade and other questions of that nature? What do we know with regard to the attitude of Lord Salisbury on the question of Free Trade? I am one of those who believe, and I hope there are few constituencies in Scotland in which the belief does not exist, that, whatever happens, this country must stand, without any hesitation, and without any qualification, by the doctrines which make food cheap, which make all the first necessities of life cheap, to the consumer. That is my view; and I confess that I have not seen such utterances on the part of the Conservatives as would inspire me with any confidence that they are sound on that point. On the contrary, I cannot see into some of their mysterious minds,

and I must admit that I think Lord Salisbury has got a very mysterious mind, and I do not feel that I have the key to it. By some he is considered an out-and-out Conservative. Still there is a dash of recklessness in the constitution of Lord Salisbury, of which I do not know whether it is alarming to his friends, but it is somewhat startling even to his political opponents, and I say frankly that I do not feel that I have got a key to his mind. But I do think that there are considerable grounds for suspecting that the mind of the Conservative party, as regards Free Trade, is not in a sound condition. They have appointed this celebrated Commission on Trade. They have spoken much of the depression of trade, but I have not found that they have done what many Liberals, what many economists, what many writers have done, and that is, stated beforehand, publicly and frankly, their own views and convictions as to what are the causes of the depression. I do not think that these causes are so very far to seek. Some lie on the surface, and others may lie deeper down; but the Conservatives seem to have some difficulty in stating their own belief on the matter, because they wish to reserve it to their Commission to give utterance to what I believe in their hearts they have some suspicion of being the cause—namely, Foreign Tariffs and our Free Trade system. I say again, that on this second point I have no confidence, notwithstanding the introduction of the words “political economy” and “common-sense” into Lord Randolph Churchill’s manifesto—I have no confidence whatever in the political economy of the Conservative party.

*Their Conduct  
in Office.*

Well, but have I confidence in their power of resistance? in their appreciation of the forces of the day? Have I confidence in the degree to which they will stand by the convictions to which they have given expression? I am bound to say—and I wish to say it without any violence, and without any party spirit, but simply in reply to the challenge that I am not to fire my guns over the heads of the Conservative party—that I see an extraordinary contrast between the views which they have held when they were in opposition and the views which they hold when they are in office. I will forbear to-night from speaking on a point on which I have spoken on one or two occasions before—namely, the attitude of the Conservative party towards those Irish questions which at present are the most important that can be placed before the constituencies. I am speaking of other matters, and amongst them is

one incident which happened at the end of last session, to which the Conservative papers say I attach too great significance. It was in connection with a Poor Law question, and I call it one of great importance. The Conservatives had taken an entirely opposite view of the Medical Relief Bill a few weeks before, but the moment when the last days of the session saw them in office, their attitude changed. To the intense surprise—for I know it myself—and to the indignation, of some of their own supporters, they changed their front entirely, and passed a Bill which, whatever may be the arguments to be adduced on our side, had just before met with their determined opposition. Now, I wonder what Lord Elcho would say to that? But I know what he says on another incident which occurred about the same time. There was a Bill in these unfortunate three weeks at the end of the session which displayed the extent to which the Conservatives would yield to the popular feeling the moment they were in office—a Bill which concerned the position of the Police. The Police are, as every one of us will admit, as a body, as capable of exercising the franchise as any other body of their countrymen; but, at the same time, they hold this extremely delicate position, that they are a force entrusted with maintaining order, not only in ordinary times, but also during heated electoral contests; and it has always been held that for this reason the Police should be kept clear of politics, and should not be put in this position, that, while they side as individuals with one political party or the other in the electoral contest, they should then have to interpose as officers of the State when one side or the other commit excesses. I do not wish you to give any opinion on this particular point. That is not the question. It is an eminently difficult matter, and one upon which great caution should be exercised. But the enfranchisement of the Police was proposed at the fag end of the session, and just before the general election; and when Sir Richard Cross, the Home Secretary, was appealed to, he said with the greatest blandness, and with a kind of jaunty readiness, “Oh, the Police are a capital body of men; let us enfranchise them like everybody else; why not?” And so question after question went, I may almost say, by default, and this under leadership, and under circumstances which we remember but too well; and yet we are asked to place our confidence, by preference, in the men and in the party who are now in power! That is a confidence which I for one am not prepared to give. I see nothing in

the past which has justified it, and I see nothing in the present which justifies it.

I must ask you to allow me to submit two more short arguments on this point. We have not only to look, as I have said before, to the manifesto, but we have to look to the general condition of the party. I am not going to-night to denounce either the recklessness, or the versatility, or any of the various attributes of Lord Randolph Churchill; but I do venture to say that the position which Lord Randolph Churchill has taken in the Conservative party is a matter which cannot be ignored by the country. He was treated by the Conservative candidate for this constituency in rather a light manner. He said, "Oh, it will be said that Lord Randolph Churchill is somewhat too Liberal." Well, I have not confined myself to any statement of that kind to-night. I have not confined myself to the criticism of Lord Randolph Churchill, but I have carried my criticism to Lord Salisbury, whom I do not trust as an economist, as a financier, or as a general manager of our home affairs. But we cannot ignore the position which Lord Randolph Churchill has acquired in the Conservative party, partly by his undoubted talents, partly by his aptitude for catching the ear of popular audiences. He has to a great extent—it cannot be denied—revolutionised the tendencies of the Conservative party, and I pity the good country squires, who will be educated by Lord Randolph Churchill in a school which will be more severe, and will make an even greater tax upon their intellectual capacities, than the school in which they were educated by the late Lord Beaconsfield. I could instance one point, a point upon which the Liberal Party are divided. A Bill was introduced with regard to Leasehold Franchise. This bill, introduced by a prominent Radical member whom we all much respect, was denounced by the Attorney-General of the Liberal party, but the bill was out-trumped by Lord Randolph Churchill, now the co-leader with Lord Salisbury of the Conservative party. And these are the gentlemen, this is the party, who appeal to us and say, "We are so steady, we are so sober, that you must leave the flag of the greatest financier of the age,—that you must leave the flag of Mr. Gladstone; that you must desert him who has been the staunch upholder of the Liberal political economy to which this country owes so much, and rally to the new flag of the Tory Democracy."

But then it is said, "Look at the Conservative success; see

what they have done during three or four weeks in the way of passing Acts." Dear me! If ever an unfortunate pretence and pretension has been put forward by a political party, it is to appeal to the successful legislation of those last three weeks as a proof of statesmanship and capacity. Nearly all these Acts had been elaborated and prepared by Liberal statesmen, or were the common product of Commissions, but not one of them had what one may call a spontaneous Conservative origin. And why could they pass them, as pass them they did? Why could they pass those bills, to the passage of which they now point with pride, asserting that through passing these bills they prove their superior capacity as statesmen? Because the Liberal opposition behaved in a totally different way towards them to the way in which they themselves had behaved to the Liberal Government; and because in a memorable debate—which I can never forget—they had so satisfied the Irish Nationalist party at the expense of Lord Spencer that the Irish no longer obstructed the business of the day as they had obstructed Liberal legislation. And it is to success so achieved that they point, and say, "See, we passed the Bill for the Housing of the Poor,—we passed this bill and that bill,—we were able to do more in three weeks than the Liberals were able to do before, and we establish this as a claim to the consideration of our countrymen!" There is no foundation whatever for a claim of that kind. We assisted them to pass those bills. They were bills which we considered necessary for the good of the country, and the Liberals co-operated with the Conservatives to pass bills which had a common origin. Is it fair of the Conservative party to claim credit for legislative achievement thus acquired?

Gentlemen, I trust that in all I have said I have remained entirely within the bounds of fair controversy and argument. I have answered a challenge that has been thrown out, and,—in order to show that I am in no way guided in this matter by any party feeling, except so far as I wish to establish the claims of my own party to confidence, and to deny the justice of arguments which have been put forward on the other side,—I will frankly say I do not agree with the attack which has been made upon the Conservative party—on the ground that they are carrying out certain arrangements in foreign policy, which had been initiated by the Liberal party, but which they had themselves previously opposed. I mention this in order to establish a point to which personally I

*Fallacious  
Claims of  
Legislative  
Success.*

*Lord Salisbury's Foreign  
Policy.*

*The Need of  
Continuity.*

attach the greatest importance in the interest of the country at large—namely, the necessity for continuity in our foreign policy. I hold that, if this country changes its foreign policy with every Administration, we give too great an advantage to those foreign statesmen who are able from year to year, and from five years to five years, to carry out steadily their aims and their objects. And I hold that the situation of this country is such that it cannot, even if it wishes, change the whole of its foreign policy at will. An Administration cannot reject the acts of its predecessors. You remember when the Liberal party first came into office in 1880-81, how it was continually urged, and in acrimonious debate, that, after having denounced the actions of their predecessors with regard to foreign policy, they were themselves carrying out the same policy. Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues were denounced over and over again by the Conservatives for doing certain acts in foreign politics which, it was said, they had condemned in Opposition. They could not help themselves. They found the country tied to certain obligations; and an Administration, when it comes into office in this country, must think first of maintaining the word of the country to other nations, and only in the second place of its own interests and its own consistency. It must maintain the plighted word of the country. And so it has happened again. The tables have been turned; and now the Conservatives find themselves in the position that, having denounced the Afghan arrangement, and having denounced the financial arrangements in Egypt, they have been obliged to carry them out. No blame rests upon them for having carried them out. The criticism is not fair that, though they condemned these acts in Opposition, nevertheless they now give effect to them. They must give effect to them. The necessary continuity of British politics compels them.

It was said, for instance, that the Financial Convention with Egypt, which they had denounced, was nevertheless carried out by them. But they could not afford to offend all the nations of Europe, to whom the late Government had plighted their word. And so with Russia. What would be the position of this country in future negotiations, if it were known that a change of Administration would immediately bring about changes in the engagements which the country had undertaken? Where should we be? How would this country be able to carry on its great international negotiations, and find its way through those increasing difficulties by which we

see ourselves surrounded, if at any moment the overthrow of a Minister meant the overthrow of the policy of his country? And I draw this moral,—I know many do not share my opinion,—but I trust the day will soon return when the foreign questions in which English duties, English interests and responsibilities are concerned will once more be lifted beyond the reach of our party struggles, and be treated simply in a national spirit. We cannot compete with foreign diplomacy,—we shall continually find ourselves thwarted everywhere, if in negotiations foreign countries begin to speculate, not on the will of Great Britain, but on the will of a party or of a Minister. They must know that Great Britain is unanimous on certain points; and I hope that the difficulties with which both parties—the Liberal party and the Conservative party—have had to contend through foreign questions having been dragged within the area of party criticism, may prove how important it is, if possible, to reunite upon questions which need never divide parties at all, and that both parties together may work for maintaining the reputation and the power of the Empire at large. For my part, I have no sympathy when I see men on either side expressing satisfaction with the failure of an Administration in its international negotiations with foreign countries. I never wish to forget that it is my country, our country, which is ranged on the one side, and that if the Administration succeeds—to whatever party it may belong—its success should be welcomed by all patriots.

Gentlemen, I have shown you, as I proposed to do, the claims—*The Object of Liberal Unity.* as I consider the futile claims—which the Conservative party are pressing now, for the support of a portion of the Liberal party. Those claims will be pressed in vain, because I believe that the Liberal party are now thoroughly convinced that to face the great difficulties that are before us—difficulties to which nearly all speakers to Liberal audiences have called attention—the unity of our own party is essentially necessary. It is not necessary for the purpose of securing—it is not with the object of securing—power, or place, or supremacy, but it is because the situation is such that individual differences must be sunk for the common good, in order that a Parliament may be possible which shall be strong enough, through the mandate which it will have from the people, to maintain its dignity and its character in the face of the unex-

*A Troubled  
Future.*

amplified difficulties which it will find before it. I expect that we shall have a troubled future. I foresee—perhaps I see too darkly in this matter—I foresee that, in the very first months of the newly-assembled Parliament, it will be necessary for the statesmen of all parties to display a firmness and a courage which have scarcely ever been so indispensable in the whole course of our political history. I foresee that we may have scenes and difficulties which the country will deplore—which every single individual in the country will deplore—and I do not think that under circumstances of that kind any symptoms of faint-heartedness should be shown. No symptoms should be shown that either party would be likely to yield to the temptation of buying votes that are not fairly given—fairly given for the protection of the interests of the Empire at large. No such party ought to succeed. I know the responsibility which rests on all those who appeal to men to sink their differences upon points on which their own opinions are strong. But we have a distinct programme before us. We have work to do which has been pointed out—we are summoned to do that work—we are summoned to do that work together, with a large majority, with a powerful majority, conveying the confidence of the people; but I think that there ought to be, at the same time, a distinct understanding that, having sunk our differences for one object, no advantage should be taken of the majority thus acquired for purposes beyond the common programme upon which we are all agreed. That common programme involves legislation which you know; it involves the four points which are put forth in Mr. Gladstone's Manifesto; but it involves more than that—it involves, above all things, the maintenance of the dignity of Parliament, and the maintenance of the integrity of the United Kingdom.



## V.

Delivered at Glasgow on the 14th October 1885.

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Mr. GOSCHEN said—I thank you for the welcome which you have just given me. Glasgow seems to me to be eminently a political city. You listen to the views of statesmen belonging to various schools of thought, and it seems that you are glad to see in your midst the representatives of various opinions. At no period of our Parliamentary history has there been more interest taken by all portions of this country in an election; and indeed there has been no previous election which, for good or for evil, is likely to have so great an effect upon the destinies of this country. I trust that in that election all classes will take part, the newly enfranchised class and the old classes, and that none will say, “Our time is past; we will fall back from the ranks.” It is the duty of all, if they wish to give to the history of this country the same character which it has had in the past, to take their part in those political struggles and those political movements by which the destiny of Great Britain and Ireland is determined from stage to stage. Let none exclaim, “Power has passed from our hands!”

*Protest against  
Political Abs-  
tention.*

It has been said that any person would be hooted from a Scotch platform unless he were able to go beyond certain legislative proposals which were first put forward by Lord Hartington, and which have since been embodied in Mr. Gladstone's Manifesto. I have not found that to be the case. So far, I have not been hooted from any platform in Scotland because of my refusal to endorse some views which form, not the authoritative programme, but possibly the supplemental programme, of a portion of the Liberal party. A little time ago we were told that the Liberal party must have a cry. We have something better than a cry; we have a pro-

*A Programme  
better than a  
Cry.*

gramme. A cry may be more taking, may be more stimulating, but remember that a cry, by concentrating attention on a single subject may have this drawback, of crowding out the programme of the party at large. For my part, I think the country does not wish to go forward in any especially sensational manner; and for the Liberal party it is enough to work out the programme proposed by its leader. We wish to go forward in support of that programme with all the resolution of which the party is capable, and with all the common-sense which characterises the British people, whether Liberal or Conservative.

We have been told that we wanted a cry in order to kindle the newly-enfranchised class. (Hear, hear.) Yes; but I would ask that gentleman who says "Hear, hear," to look out the word "*Kindling the Democracy.*" "kindle" in Johnson's Dictionary, and I will tell him what he will find there. He will find that kindling means "to inflame the passions." That is the first meaning given under the word "to kindle," in respect of its metaphorical meanings—and, in order to illustrate it, quotations are given according to the method of that dictionary. Here is the quotation to illustrate the word "kindle"—it is from an old English poet—

"Kindling each other's fires one by one,  
Till, all inflamed, they all in one agree."

No bad description of an electioneering process perhaps not unknown in these modern times. But to me there is something which is more important at this crisis of our country, than to "inflame the passions" or to kindle enthusiasm, and that is to look to it that all classes shall unite together in a sober sense of what are the interests of the United Kingdom. We want enthusiasm, but we also want common-sense; and this English, this Scottish quality of common-sense has distinguished the history of the United Kingdom, and has brought us forward progressively and peacefully, to the envy of Continental nations. I trust that it is not at this moment, because we have summoned to our ranks another numerous class, that we are going to abandon the spirit in which the Liberal party and all parties ought to act.

Gentlemen, you will readily understand by what chain of thoughts I have been led to speak to you of common-sense. I have in my mind not only the special programme on which I think I may say that all Liberals are practically agreed, but I remember that we

have also to deal with a supplemental or unauthorised programme. And, again, we have not only to consider the proposals on this supplemental list. We cannot ignore the language used in recommending them, and the spirit in which they are put forward. In speeches which it has been my fate to make elsewhere, I have discussed in some detail the suggestions thrown out, the language used, and the spirit displayed in the controversy about Free Education, about Allotments, and other cognate subjects. One question I have not dealt with yet to the same extent. It is one of very practical interest to many in this room; it is the question of Taxation. It will clearly be the duty of the coming Parliament to overhaul and thoroughly to examine the taxation of the country; and it appears to me that it will be right and necessary to throw the two great branches, the two great departments, of taxation together. I mean Imperial taxation and local *Taxation, Imperial and Local.* You will have to add them together, and then examine how the total ought to be redistributed. A certain class may be paying too much as regards local expenditure, and may claim to be relieved in that respect, but the claim cannot be decided without reckoning how much that same class pays in respect of Imperial expenditure. There are three great interests which contribute together to taxation, Imperial and local. They are land, capital, and labour. Land claims at this moment to be relieved of a portion of its local expenditure, because it is alleged that a number of new burdens have been placed upon it. On the other hand, it is contended that land has had certain immunities from Imperial taxation, and that land ought to be put upon the same footing as all other property with regard to the death duties and other taxation. These claims, it appears to me, must be considered together. We must consider whether land is paying too much as regards local taxation, and whether it is paying too little as regards Imperial taxation.

No question will more interest the next Parliament than what are to be the burdens upon land? I see already that great expectations are formed. Looking to the projected increase of expenditure for many purposes—upon which I will ask you to let me say a word presently—looking to that increased expenditure, great expectations are raised as to the share of our aggregate taxation which land may be able to bear; but is it not open to question whether land will be able to bear the same burdens now which it was able to bear when rents were 25 per cent. higher, and the selling value of land *Taxes on Land.*

was at least 30 per cent. above what it is at this moment? We have all a common interest in this. If we are not landowners, we expect land to contribute its fair quota towards general needs. We are interested, therefore, in the taxable power of land; and any measure, or any language, or any arousing of public sentiment, which would lower to any great extent the value of land, will be lowering a property to which we look to bear its share in Imperial and local taxation. Let us take care that we do not get on a wrong scent in this respect.

Land must now, in the opinion of all of us, be treated like moveable and personal property. But, at the same time, it is said that land must be exceptionally treated as being a monopoly. Then, are we going to treat land exceptionally in both respects, as regards taxation and as regards expropriation; or are we going to say at one time that it is like any other property for taxation, and at another it is unlike any other property for expropriation? I do not ask you to answer that question, and I do not intend to answer it myself; but what I wish to do is to place this consideration before you and before the country—that if we are to look to land to bear a great portion of the burdens of the country—and I should be glad if we could thus look to land—we should remember at the same time that we wish—and I believe the Liberal party are almost unanimous in wishing—that our land should be a more common possession, and should be held by many more thousands, and tens of thousands more, than it is held by at the present moment. Therefore I say in the interest of this movement, with a view that land may not be simply the rich man's luxury, but that it may be also the poor man's hope and the poor man's home, with a view to encouraging all classes—the striving middle class, the rising artisan class, and the agricultural labourer—all to hold and to possess land, let us not commit the imprudence of trying to place so great a portion of the burdens of the country on land that the poor man will be unable to pay the taxation on it. I wish, by these remarks, to show how necessary it is to probe these questions to the bottom. It is a popular cry to declare that land does not pay enough and that land must pay more, and that those are retrograde, selfish, and cold Liberals who say a word on behalf of the land. But I point out to those who hold that opinion, what they seem to ignore, that, while land must pay its fair share, its full share, its hereditary share, of taxation, it

must at the same time be treated with equity, if we wish it to be held as a desirable possession by men belonging to all classes of the community.

And now one word with regard to the taxation of Capital and of Labour. We know that the main point which has been put forward as the first object of political solicitude at the present day, is to raise the material resources of the poor. That is an object in which we may all combine; but in combining for that object, as I trust we do, let us remember that there is a certain confusion about the word "poor" which may lead to much misapprehension. When we speak of the poor, do we mean those who are on the verge of pauperism? or do we mean the bulk of the working-classes of the country? I find that political speakers jumble up the two ideas too much; that occasionally they mean the proletariat—the pauperised element of the community—while at others they mean a body who would themselves repudiate the name—they mean the bulk of the working-classes, who, however much they may have to struggle, nevertheless have an independent spirit, and are not going to be pauperised or patronised by any other class. Well, we have to consider how taxation ought to bear upon the working-classes, not only on the poor, but on those who constitute so large a proportion of our force and power—our thriving and strong artisans. If, in the examination of the distribution of burdens, it is found that any one of the three factors which have to contribute—namely, land, capital, and labour—have to pay too much, let the balance be restored; but I venture to say to this meeting—I would say the same before an audience composed exclusively of working men—that it is essential to the general prosperity that all classes should make some contribution to the burdens of the Empire. We cannot look only to their means. It has been said that the working-classes have become the masters of the State. How that may be, I do not know, if all classes continue, as I hope they will continue, to take their share in the government. And let us hope that in this country we may never see a horizontal division, a division which leaves one party above a line and all those below it belonging to the opposite party. In this country we have hitherto seen that political parties have been divided vertically; that there have been Conservatives and Liberals among the upper classes, and Conservatives and Liberals among the working-class. It would be an evil day for us if all Conser-

*Taxes on  
Labour.*

vatives were in future to be found above a certain line, and if all Liberals were below a certain line; and if British politics should take a shape which, thank God, they never yet have taken—the shape of a conflict of classes instead of a conflict of principles.

Well, I have asked whether the working-classes should not continue to contribute a portion of the Imperial revenue. At present, they contribute in three forms; they contribute through the tax upon drink, through the tax upon tobacco, and through the tax upon tea. I would not be content, as I trust you would not be content, to rest the taxation of the working-classes simply upon the consumption of drink, and thus to put the whole of their taxation, if I might thus express myself, upon a side issue, flattering ourselves that in taxing them we were only taxing them in the interest of the temperance cause. It is well that we should work for the temperance cause, but it would be an error in finance, as well as in financial and imperial policy, if we were to rest the whole taxation of the working-classes simply upon the one item of drink. I believe they will recognise themselves how right it is that it should be brought home to them that they have a personal interest in the expenditure of the country, and that they should bring their vast influence to bear upon proper national economy; and that they should not get into the ways of some other nations, who think that they may vote any expenditure because it is not they who have to pay for it.

*Taxes on  
Capital.*

Then there is the third item, the third great factor—namely, capital—capital in all its forms—not only that of the very rich, of those who are called “bloated capitalists,” of the large manufacturers. May I hope that you all realise that capital is, in the vast majority of cases, the friend and assistant of industry, and that therefore, while capital must be called upon to pay its fair share, and its full share, of national burdens, it is wrong so to present the case to the public at large as if a kind of fine should be imposed upon capital for being capital? I trust that no contemporary historian will have to tell the story of a conflict between capital and labour, such as is called the tug of war in gymnastic exhibitions. I do not think it a right description of the relations between the two, to exhibit them as pulling against each other in opposite directions. As for myself, while I would wish to tax capital as heavily as is consistent with its free movement, and with that tendency towards accumulation which in all countries has been recognised as one of the

legitimate rewards of industry, I would not approach the subject in what I may call a hostile spirit, as if capital were to be ostracised, as if capital were an enemy upon whom you ought to levy a premium of insurance for refraining from an attack on it. It is not in a spirit of "ransom" that capital ought to be taxed, nor is it in a spirit of desire to escape from ransom that capital should argue the matter. I know that another word has been substituted in place of "ransom." It is a much better word: it is "insurance;" but I do not like that word either. I do not like the idea that capital is to make sacrifices because it is afraid that, if it does not make them, it will be attacked. We have heard that the system of insurance sometimes has the effect of deadening the feelings of those who insure, and I should prefer that those classes who have capital should contribute spontaneously as well as by law, because they consider that it is right to do so, but not because they are afraid. That is not the spirit in which I wish taxation to be recast in this country.

It is not before an audience as large as this that it would be fit to argue at any length and in detail such a question as that of a graduated income-tax. I will confine myself to saying that you have not only to look at the motive which may inspire you in suggesting taxation, but at the general effect which such taxation will have; and it is one of the first principles in regulating finance, that you must consider how far the collection is possible, how far fraud will be avoided, how far you may, or may not, be closing the door upon that increase of revenue which you desire. You are not able, simply, to proceed upon the first logical doctrine of ability to pay. A graduated income-tax has been tried, as we know, but we have not been told whether it has succeeded. Those who have examined the history of the case generally quoted know that the Act which imposed something resembling a graduated income-tax was repealed because it did not succeed. I will not argue out the principle of the matter at this present moment, but you have to consider, as I say, a vast number of questions in connection with the imposition of any new system of taxation. You must look at its probable practical success as well as at the logical force of the arguments in its favour. To sum up this part of the question I say—Let the new Parliament, let the next Government, re-examine the whole question, and it must re-examine it, putting Imperial and local taxation together. Let it see what are the

*A Graduated  
Income-Tax.*

claims—the hereditary claims—either for immunity, or for the retention of burdens long since imposed. Let it say what labour ought to contribute, what capital and income ought to contribute, and what land ought to contribute; and then in a spirit of justice and equity, which may commend itself to all classes of the community, let the new redistribution of burdens be made.

*Expenditure  
and Economy.*

You cannot redistribute burdens without taking another factor into your consideration, and that is—How much money do you want for Imperial and local purposes together? What is going to be your expenditure? A very important question to ask in view of many of the views that are being put forward! We have been warned that there is a modern school who do not intend to uphold the views of national economy held in the past, and who are prepared to argue that increased expenditure will be justified, provided you put the expenses involved upon new and more capable shoulders; but I venture to think that some of the considerations I have put forward will show that the new shoulders may have anyhow a good deal to carry. Supposing land cannot bear as much as it has borne hitherto, supposing the farmers whose profits have been immensely diminished are unable to carry the load they have borne hitherto, supposing that labour is paying too much, and that a portion of its burdens must be put upon others—then there remains only the moveable property of the country to bear the excess burden coming from the other classes, and the excess of new expenditure that is to be incurred. Language is used with regard to a couple of millions here and a few more millions there, whether for free education or for any other purpose, as if it would be a flea-bite to find all this money. I say, be warned, because, if I have been able to make myself clear to you, there is already a considerable heaping up of a load that will prove extremely embarrassing to the finances of the future. The State and the municipalities will probably be found dear purveyors. You do not get things so cheaply from the State; and though it is argued that in the future there will be extraordinary economical virtue about the municipalities, nevertheless I doubt whether what they furnish will be so extremely cheap. When you come to transfer a number of duties which now rest upon individuals, and call upon society, either in one shape or in another, to undertake them, you will find the cost to society will be greater than it has been to the individual. Thus I see in



prospect, growing expenditure ; I see the necessity for a revision of taxation ; and what I see impresses me with the profound conviction of the necessity for extreme caution in the way in which expenditure is to be developed, and I shall indeed be sorry if the item of economy be struck out from the Liberal programme of the future.

Well now, it appears to me to be of extreme importance, if we are going to look mainly to personal property to bear the burdens of the future, and if we are to have that rattling income-tax of 10 per cent., which seems to be one of the dreams of the advanced school—it appears to me most necessary that there should be a considerable income to tax. What will be the position of this country if, after having settled that large additional charges are to be placed upon income, the total national income should begin to decrease? I am one of those who consider that it is the business of statesmen to look not only to increasing the material resources of a single class, but that it is their bounden duty to see how far that national prosperity is either progressing or suffering, upon which the interest of all must depend. I have thought it somewhat singular that in many of the speeches which I have been reading, mainly, I think, in the case of the advanced school, little attention has been paid to that severe depression which, I am sorry to say, is lying on so many industries of this country. I can conceive why the consideration of this depression has not been prominently put forward. One of the rhetorical arguments of recent days has been to put two striking pictures before the country—the one, the extreme poverty of certain classes of the community ; and the other, the extreme wealth which is shown among other classes. But in the desire to show this contrast, in the desire to point to the undoubted extent of accumulated wealth, I question whether it is right to omit the consideration, or to ignore or to minimise the consideration of the undoubted fact—that for some years past our national industry has not been such as to increase the profits of capitalists or of the employers of labour. It appears to me from all the inquiries I have been able to make that, while wages have, I am glad to say, been still fairly maintained, the profits of employers—profits in most of the large industries of this country—have been very much diminished. (“No,” and cheers.) I hear a gentleman say “No.” I trust that he will be summoned as one of the first witnesses before the Royal Com-

*Vigilance in  
respect of  
Sources of  
National  
Wealth.*

mission on Trade, because if it is so—if profits have not been diminished—the mind of the country will be much relieved. I thought that even in this city there had been thousands of persons out of work; I thought that the condition of many of the industries, such as the iron industry, the shipping industry, and others which I will not enumerate, had for some time past been such that profits had been not only diminished but had been almost nil. If that is so, what is our duty? Our duty seems to me to be, first to face the grounds for this depression, to look at the natural causes which are producing it, and to see how they can best be met. It is not by ignoring them, any more than by exaggerating them, that we shall be able to accomplish anything.

*The Royal  
Commission.*

For my part, I must frankly admit that I have had the misfortune not to be able to induce myself to believe that even the appointment of a Royal Commission would be able to solve this problem. I will tell you why. I do not think that there are any legislative remedies possible for this state of things, unless you are prepared to accept the doctrines of protective duties, or to deal with the currency. I hope, indeed I am sure, I shall not be misunderstood. I do not mean to say that dealing with either of these two matters would have any effect, or would have the proper effect, in improving the present state of things; but I cannot imagine anybody sitting down, even in the chamber where the Royal Commission meets, and thinking of any other legislative remedy than these. What else can there be? Some persons among the working men themselves have thought not of legislative measures, but of curtailing production. I should like to say one word on this suggestion, because I can easily understand how a philanthropic impulse might carry men away and lead them possibly to what might be an industrial disaster for working men themselves. They might say, "Look at the number of hours that men work; let us curtail those hours, and then not only will less be produced, but the working men will have greater leisure, possibly with the same pay." Yes, if we lived in a land surrounded by a wall, that might be true; but if, by curtailing production, we simply encourage our foreign rivals to rush in where we abandon the ground, what advantage shall we have derived? We shall have stopped our production simply to introduce foreign merchandise into the markets we vacate.

Nothing seems to me to be of more importance than always to

remember that we are not, and we never can be, in a position to argue out these matters, simply from the point of view of what we do ourselves. Given the desire to increase—as philanthropists and politicians would equally wish to increase—the material resources of the working-classes by a rise in wages,—might not the cheaper labour of the Continent, side by side with our increased payments to the individual workmen on the produce manufactured, keep the more highly paid artisan out of foreign markets, and thus cause us to lose some of the customers, some of the markets, on which we have to rely? Clearly, therefore, so far as the material resources of the poor can be influenced by a rise in wages, the matter does not rest in the hands of the people of this country. We are competing with foreign nations, and we must look at the conditions under which that competition has to be carried on.

There is one way in which we have increased, and I trust we shall continue to increase, the resources of the poor. It is by enabling every shilling earned to command a greater amount of necessaries. I should like to see the man who could show us how, in the face of foreign competition, it is possible artificially either to raise wages or curtail the hours of labour. But the Liberal party have for many years steadily kept one object in sight. They have endeavoured to make sure that the earnings of the working man should go as far as absolute liberty of purchase would make it possible for them to go. And to those who accuse the class sometimes called moderate Liberals, but whom I would prefer to call common-sense Liberals, to those who accuse them of coldness I would say, Read the speech of Mr. Bright, the old tribune of the people, the veteran of the Liberal cause, the man whose name has been a household word at every Liberal gathering, not the moderate Liberal, but the old strong and stout Radical; see what he has said in the speech he made the other day about the progress of the people and the performances of the Liberal party in the past. But we must not be content with what has been done. I entirely agree with those who say that the statesmen of the present day have no right simply to appeal to the services of those who have gone before them. Forward we must go; but I hope that we may be allowed to go forward, taught by the immense results, and taught by the progress, which the doctrines, not only of the Liberal party, but of the Radical party of the past, have brought about. I was speaking just

*Foreign Competition and British Wages.*

*The Cheapening of Necessaries.*

now of the position in which we are placed as regards foreign countries. I have often spoken of it before, and I do not wish to exhaust your patience this evening by dwelling on the various circumstances which hitherto have enabled this country to hold its own. We must look to our industrial laurels, and we must not think,—we must not be led aside even for six months by the idea,—that legislation will be of much avail to us in this matter. It is, as it always has been, by the strength and the skill of the British working man; it is by the progressive education which may be given him; it is by the encouragement of capital still to devote itself to every industrial enterprise; it is by the combined action of all classes, and by steadiness on all sides, that we may hope to overcome difficulties which, mind you, are not weighing down our commerce alone, but are weighing down the commerce and industries of other countries as well. That is a point never to be lost sight of. If they tell you to look at our suffering industries, and from that to condemn our system of Free Trade, ask at once whether industries are not even in a more depressed condition in countries living under that system which the Fair Trade party claim to be an advantage—namely, the protection of their industries—the imposition of compulsory purchase at enhanced prices on consumers.

*Conditions  
of future  
Prosperity.*

I should not be doing justice to this subject if I were not to allude to the fact that in our dependencies abroad, and in the vast empire which we still happily possess, we have commercial advantages which are not shared by many of our Continental neighbours. I am one of those who have contended, and will contend here and everywhere, that it is impossible for a nation such as ours, with our foreign dependencies, with our foreign customers, to argue that we have little concern with foreign and international questions. There are some who tell the working-classes, “Do not concern yourselves with foreign politics.” But our foreign politics nearly always involve some circumstance bearing vitally upon some of the great industries of this country. It is said, for instance, “What does a dispute in Egypt mean to the agricultural labourers in a Midland county?” (A voice, “More taxation.”) Yes, it means more taxation. But supposing that through the loss of the route to India the safety of India was imperilled, what then would become of tens of thousands of Manchester artisans, whose commerce with India has been brought to its present state from the fact that

*Importance  
of Foreign  
Affairs,*

India is a dependency of Great Britain? I wish from the bottom of my heart that it could be brought home to the minds of all the working men of this country that they have a deep interest, not in petty struggles or petty wars, but in the bearings which international transactions have upon their commercial relations with countries, towards which they have duties, but in which they have also interests. I am never anxious to argue this question too much upon material grounds; I like to argue it upon the duties which we may have to those whom we have undertaken to protect. I do not think that any class of my countrymen would wish to repudiate engagements that we have taken—engagements to men who have staked much upon the word, the plighted word, of this country. But it can be argued from another standpoint, which, perhaps, brings the idea better home to every man. It can be argued that, if foreign markets and colonial markets are important to us—and depend upon it they are, at least in the eyes of those of us who think that it is equally important to consider how men can earn wages at all, as to consider how they may get an extra shilling on the wages they are earning,—because that is the point,—the industries of this country would fatally suffer if we were to lose some of those dependencies which at present are united to this kingdom. Therefore, when it is said, “What have we to do with a trifling incident among the Turcomans?” I say, “Nothing or all. Nothing, if India is of no importance to us; all, if India is of all importance to us.” And so I want you to understand that we cannot shake ourselves free from the consideration of foreign politics. We must consider them in their relation, not only to the duties, but to the industries of almost every part of the community; and if we consider those foreign questions from this point of view, still more I trust may it be possible to enlist the sympathy of every class in the maintenance of the closest ties between ourselves and our colonies. I should be sorry to think that any events which have taken place had in any degree shaken the desire of every Liberal, and every Radical, to maintain the bonds which unite us to the English-speaking communities across the seas—bonds which I believe to be a source of strength to ourselves, and a source of strength to the colonies, and a source of great prosperity to both. It is our duty and our interest alike, to stand by our Colonial Empire.

*And of Close  
Union with  
Colonies.*

I trust you have understood the drift and spirit of the observa-

tions which I have made. I will yield to none, and those who agree with me will yield to none, in the desire to increase the material resources of the working-classes; but we must look facts in the face, and it is not only unwise, but in my view it is wrong, to hold out expectations which could not possibly be fulfilled. I am told we are slow. You think, perhaps, there are faster means of arriving at the goal. By what means? (A voice, "Tax the landowner.") A tax on the landowner? Why! I would like to see the gentleman who makes that remark himself become a landowner. My wish is just that. But that cry for a tax on the landowner reveals the spirit against which I have ventured to make a humble protest. What I do not see is, that what I will call penal taxation upon any class would promote the happiness of those who clamour for it. I know that if at this moment you were to attempt by any such penal legislation to discourage or to frighten any of the great industries of this country, you might get some momentary advantage by an immoral division, but you would not get any final economical advantage to the class on behalf of which you would have interfered. No; and if you were to take the whole accumulated wealth of this nation, and divide it by the thirty millions of heads that compose it, and you were to give each their share, you would have ruined the future of this country—you would have struck at the sources of its prosperity; the class to whom you had given that distribution would have their small share in the accumulated wealth, but all the stimulus to future exertion, all those forces which promote civilisation, all those forces which have brought this people to its present position, they would all be annihilated, and by that one act you would not only have destroyed our reputation, but have imperilled our very existence. It is true that this theory has been put forward in a somewhat crude form by the observation of the gentleman at the bottom of the hall; but I object altogether to the idea that it is possible so to tap wealth by force of law as to give it that vivifying influence which you desire. I do not know whether I shall give utterance to any sentiment which will be called timid or reactionary, but I will say that there is no country in the world, ancient or new, where wealth has been so spontaneously poured out as in this United Kingdom. You may tap it in future by force of law, but whether you compare what has been done by the wealthier classes of their own accord, their muni-

*Penal Taxation no  
Remedy for  
Distress.*

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ficence for public objects, or the sums they have spent in a thousand other ways, I say that this spirit which the freer system of this country has called forth in contrast to that which exists on the Continent, has been of invaluable benefit, both in inducing the wealthy to be generous with their wealth, and in preventing that resentment between classes of which hitherto we have not seen much in this United Kingdom, and which, I trust, no language will ever call forth in future. There may be men whose creed it is to tap wealth by force of law; there may be men who think that by the regulation of society they will lift the population, and will achieve untold advantages. But I hold that we have done much in the past on other lines, that we are doing much now, and that we will do, even on those older lines, much more in the future. It would be an act of folly, and almost of crime, to endeavour to cool that enthusiasm which on so many sides we see rising now to the study, and to the settlement, if settlement be possible, of many social problems. We rejoice, all must rejoice, in the awakened conscience of the nation, and in the increased degree to which the principle of duty—the duties of property, the duties of all—is put into the front; but we must not, we dare not, we cannot, entirely sink the head in the heart, and we must examine the adaptation of means to the ends which we desire. None of us in the Liberal party—none of us, I hope, in any party—are going to stand by in selfish apathy. We will study these questions. We will bring to their solution all the energy that lies in us; but we must be convinced as well as touched, we must think as well as feel. It is in that spirit that we must approach these questions; and, above all, I would entreat my fellow-countrymen to stand by one principle as the sheet-anchor of the future, as the sheet-anchor of their happiness, and that is the solidarity of interests among all the classes which compose the nation. Cordially recognising this solidarity, repudiating any antagonism between various interests, and rebuking language which would stir up resentment, let us one and all declare that it is an essential article of the Liberal creed that in heart and soul, and in every sense, we will remain a united nation.

## VI.

Delivered at Hendon, Middlesex, on the 21st October 1885.

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*Mr. Milner's  
Candidature.*

MR. GOSCHEN said—I am here on a pleasant errand to-night. I am here to support the candidature of a great personal friend of my own. I don't come here to recommend Mr. Milner in the ordinary way, with the simple platitudes with which men sometimes support the candidates belonging to their own party. I come here to tell you that I believe in Mr. Milner, and that, if you return him, you will return a man who will do honour to the Division. I have known him now for some years. I heard him speak several years ago, when a certain number of us went down to Oxford at the inauguration of a club, which was called the Palmerston Club. A considerable array of men who had held high office in the State were present, and we had a very interesting gathering. Some of the undergraduates of the day were told off to make speeches, and amongst those speeches one especially aroused the attention of those who had the honour of sitting at the high table. We heard an undergraduate speak with eloquence, independence, and originality. That undergraduate was your present candidate, Mr. Milner. I have watched him ever since. I have seen him at work, and I believe that if you should return him, he will in the course of time take his place amongst the first men of the Liberal party. He has independence—I do not know whether it is a quality which is extremely appreciated in all quarters; but I ought to tell you the truth. The deep currents of his sympathies do not run in an artificial embankment, of which other men command the locks. He thinks and feels for himself.

I am here to-night to advocate the return of a Liberal for this Division. I have at every place, where I have had an opportunity of speaking, recommended the unity of the Liberal party; and wherever I have spoken I have spoken up to the spirit of the



resolution which has been put into my hands, and which I am asked to move—

“That this meeting expresses its earnest hope that the result of the impending general election will be the return of the Liberal party to power in a majority sufficient to counterbalance any combination of the Conservatives and Irish Nationalists.”

I cordially support that resolution. It is only by the union *The Call for Liberal Unity.* of the Liberal party that we may hope to be strong enough to meet any combination between the Conservatives and the Irish Nationalists. I will not speak upon the question as to the probability whether the men who are the enemies of the integrity of the Empire will be found in the same lobby with the defenders of the British Constitution—I will not speak on the probability of such a combination; but I will say that it is essential for the interests of the country that the Liberal party should be strong enough to meet such a combination, if it should take place. To ensure that unity, Mr. Gladstone has put forward his Manifesto; to ensure that unity, many individuals, composing the Liberal party, are prepared to sink their differences. Our Conservative opponents are extremely disconcerted and troubled at the idea of unity on the part of the Liberal party, and their tactics are extremely natural, when by suggestions, by insinuations, by taunts, and by other means, they endeavour to destroy that unity; and I am bound to say that they seem to have an impression that a certain section of the Liberal party—the more advanced section—is playing into their hands. They seem to fancy that the advanced section is unnecessarily bringing to the notice of the electors subjects which cause differences amongst us; they suggest that some amongst us may be, if I might use the phrase, riding for a fall. “On what other assumption,” they may fairly say, “can we explain the utterances of some of the chiefs amongst the Liberals, exercising great authority, who appear, from week to week, to start new theories, as if on purpose to alarm a certain portion of the Liberal party?” I am suggesting what the Conservatives are saying to themselves. “What on earth,” I could imagine them to say, “did a certain statesman mean when, even at a social breakfast at Bradford, he started the theory of Triennial Parliaments? Surely this must have been done with a view to widen the breach between him and the opposite section of his own party.”

But the Conservatives must not deceive themselves. They will

not succeed by putting forward any such ideas. They will not drive the average and the common-sense Liberals into the camp, where Lord Salisbury is commander-in-chief and Lord Randolph Churchill is chief of the staff. We shall not be driven either by the taunts and the insinuations of our opponents, or by the imprudences of our rasher friends. We know the duty which we have to perform, and we shall endeavour to perform it. And I will tell you why we shall not be moved by any of these Conservative suggestions. There is one view which they endeavour to rub in, in every speech that they make, and in every article which they produce—namely, that our great leader, under whom we are summoned once more to serve, has simply become a figure-head. I call that a very offensive view, which will be repudiated by the Liberal party. And they have another idea. They hold that men such as Lord Hartington, Lord Derby, Mr. Childers, and others of that stamp, are going to betray the traditions of which they are the heirs; are going to abandon the school in which they were brought up, and, with a turn of the hand, are going to throw over the doctrines which they have learned at the feet of their chief; that they are going to throw over Gladstonian finance, Gladstonian economy, Gladstonian ideas as to the solution of our great social questions, Gladstonian views as to national expenditure, and, more than that, of national retrenchment; and that they are going to celebrate the retirement of their leader by an *auto-da-fé* of his principles and of their own. I call that an offensive view, to which I will never subscribe. The Conservatives further hold that the bulk of our party are so little impressed with the views, the traditions, and the mode of teaching by which, for the last twenty years, the Liberal party has been guided, that they all would be prepared at once to abandon the paths on which the Liberal party has accomplished all the progress of which we are proud; and that they would be ready to adopt forthwith the doctrines of a totally different school. These are offensive views, to which I will not subscribe. Confident in the loyalty of our leaders—confident that they would not allow a majority brought together upon one programme and upon one basis to be utilised for the execution of a programme on which the electorate has not yet been consulted—I beg every one who is here to-night, and every one over whom I have any influence—I would beg them not to fall out of the Liberal ranks.

*Grounds of  
Confidence in  
Liberal  
Leaders.*

Our Conservative opponents say, "If that is your view, and if you are going to support a Gladstonian Government—if you are going to support the supremacy of the Liberal party—why then this controversy about competing suggestions and ideas that are put forward by some sections of your own party? Why is there any use in opposing by argument the views of the advanced school?"

Gentlemen, that brings me to a point of considerable interest, both to the Liberal party and to the country at large, and that is, What is the present situation with regard to the programme before us? For my own part I do not see any obscurity or difficulty in that situation. We have before us the programme put forward by Mr. Gladstone—the programme on which we are asked to unite, and that programme I will call the authorised programme, or, if any one prefers it, the authoritative programme. That is the platform upon which we are asked to unite. Our opponents—the Conservatives—have little fault to find with that authoritative programme. But we are at a crisis of our history, and the opportunity has been utilised, in another quarter, to place before the electorate, not only the measures on which we are united, but also other great issues affecting our future—great questions affecting the whole construction of society; and upon these, a debate has been initiated. With regard to those issues lying outside and beyond the programme authorised by our chief, liberty is accorded to every member of the Liberal party, of which, on both sides, we shall claim to make the fullest use. Those who have put forward new views are entitled to endeavour to prove their wisdom to their countrymen, if they can. Those who see, or fancy that they see, that in those views there may be much that is wrong, are not only equally entitled, but they are equally bound, to tell their countrymen what they think.

*Controversies  
within the  
Liberal Party.*

As I have said, our Conservative opponents see no use in any debate as to questions which are not to lead at once to any political and party voting. I brush aside the suggestion. I won't admit that party considerations are entirely to close the mouths of all politicians. In the House of Commons it is difficult enough, sometimes, for men to speak the thoughts that are in their minds, and to the expression of which, whether those thoughts are right or wrong, the country is entitled. It is difficult enough in the House of Commons, but as for the idea that, even out of that House, at a time like the present, there is any class of poli-

ticians belonging to the Liberal party, or to any other party, who are to have their mouths closed, and who, for fear of being denounced as wanting in party spirit, are not to give their countrymen the benefit of such opinions as they may have formed on matters affecting the prosperity of the Empire—I say I protest against any such idea. I scout the notion that, unless we direct them to a particular issue in the present election, our utterances are of no value whatever; nor do I admit that the criticism—which is deprecated by the Conservatives as useless, and by the advanced section as out of place—has been of no use. Certain proposals, damaging, I believe, to the Liberal party, have already been removed by the force of criticism. We don't hear much more of a favourite doctrine, which might have had a great effect on a portion of the Liberal party,—we have not heard much, of late, of the famous “three F's.” It has been found that the “three F's,” however congenial to Irish soil, are not particularly adapted to the British taste; and, under the light of that “calculating criticism” which is denounced by some members of our party, the “three F's” have vanished from the unauthorised programme.

*The Authorised and the Unauthorised Programme.*

I want to say one word upon the phrase, the “authorised programme.” A distinguished Liberal challenged me yesterday to declare what I held as the authorised programme. My answer is perfectly clear upon that point. I know of one authorised programme, and of one only, and that is Mr. Gladstone's Manifesto. That is what I call the authorised programme. The wisest and the most important suggestions may be made outside of it, but these I consider to be unauthorised; and it is not necessary to subscribe to them upon pain of being excommunicated from the Liberal party. That is the point. If we go against the authorised programme, let them call “anathema;” but as to plans outside that programme, I won't say that their authors are not entitled to put them forward and to speak on their behalf, but we are not bound to subscribe to them. “No one,” said Sir Charles Dilke, “no one can deny us the right of suggesting them.” Certainly not; no one denies the right to put forward all the articles of the extra programme; but, on the other hand, there are some of us who, basing ourselves and founding ourselves even upon expressions of our chief in his own Manifesto, will claim precisely the same right of speaking against, and voting against, these items of the extra programme. Do not let us drift into any misunderstanding. There need be no misunderstanding. We are

united upon certain points, and other points are simply open questions. That is the true position. I am then asked, What are the questions to which you refer outside the authorised programme? Well, a graduated income-tax is not included in Mr. Gladstone's programme. It was said last night that a strong, and even a revolutionary, revision of taxation was within the Manifesto. But as regards the term "revolutionary," I am not entirely in accord. I shall wait to see whether the great master of modern finance, at the close of his fifty years of public service—after having brought us all up in the school in which we have learned so much—I shall wait to see whether he intends to introduce a revolutionary change. But I admit that the revision of taxation in some shape is within Mr. Gladstone's programme. I do not make the same admission as to a matter upon which strong Liberals are at variance—namely, Free Education. I consider that to be outside the authorised programme,—and we are not to be called anathema if we do not agree to it. Again, the question of Allotments, I take not to be within Mr. Gladstone's programme. I think Sir Charles Dilke said himself that the question of Allotments was not within it, but he said it was an essential part of the reform of local government contemplated by Mr. Gladstone. Now, I wonder how he knows that. This is a matter on which I have the greatest possible doubt. Why is it essential to any local government reform undertaken by Mr. Gladstone? I believe, if it were essential, Mr. Gladstone would have put it into his Manifesto. He spoke of the reform of local government, he spoke of the reform of the land laws; and the allotments are a link between the two subjects. They touch, on the one hand, municipal reform; they touch, on the other hand, the question of the Land Laws; but Mr. Gladstone in his Manifesto said not one word on this question of Allotments. Therefore, I want to know how it can be asserted that it is an essential part of any reform contemplated by Mr. Gladstone? I allude to the point, because we must have no misunderstanding of this kind. We must be able to feel that we have a clear and full expression of Mr. Gladstone's views within the four corners of his Manifesto; and for my own part I am not disposed to look beyond the four corners of that document. I shall reserve my view upon the question of Allotments; but I say this—and I say it weighing every word that I say—that men must be careful not to read into Mr. Gladstone's Manifesto anything which is not there, or else

charges will be brought that he has not put his whole policy before us. Therefore, in the interests of the Manifesto, in the interests of the unity of the Liberal party, I protest against anything being read into that Manifesto which we don't find in the sentences of which it is composed.

I have only one word more to say, gentlemen, with regard to the speech of Sir Charles Dilke. He said that I seemed, on some questions, to be at issue with the bulk of the Liberal party. I am not aware what these questions are, and, if I am not aware what the questions are which are alleged to separate me from the bulk of the Liberal party, I am not content to pass by in silence such an observation. What are the questions on which I differ from the bulk of the Liberal party? There was one. It has been settled, and now I am not at issue with the Liberal party. I am not at issue with its chief. I am bound to say—and why should I not say it before any meeting of my countrymen?—that it is my firm conviction that I agree as much with Mr. Gladstone as any of those who are my critics, who allege that I differ from the bulk of the Liberal party. Moreover, this I assert, that I am in perfect sympathy, and in agreement in opinions with Lord Hartington, with Mr. Childers, and with many others who have spoken on the Liberal side; and, if it is said that I am not in accord with the bulk of the Liberal party, it implies that the bulk of the Liberal party have transferred their allegiance from the men with whom I agree, and from the chief of the party, and that they have given their allegiance to others, with whom I may not be in such perfect sympathy.

*Common-Sense and Utopianism.*

Gentlemen, I have been asked one question more—and this is the last point upon which I shall come into conflict to-night with any of those whom I prefer to call fellow-workers with me in the same great cause, and with whom I, for my part, do not wish to establish such differences of opinion as, perhaps, they endeavour to establish with me. I have been asked, why I have said that the critics of some of the views held by the advanced school were the common-sense Liberals, and why I did not apply the same epithet to the opinions put forward by our extreme friends. Well, I wish to be polite, but I do not know how, within the limits of politeness, I can quite answer a question of that kind. What I have asserted is, that those who think with me are common-sense Liberals; but I have never used sufficiently bad language to suggest, for one moment, that those who are opposed to me spoke nonsense, so I do

not much like to be challenged upon this point. But I will tell you, as I have been challenged, where I think an offence against common-sense has been committed. It is not only in the precise proposals which represent the final result of many speeches and of long arguments, but it is in the suggestions which have been thrown out, in the modes of thought which have been encouraged, in the phrases which have been used, in the arguments which have been put forward, that I confess I have seen more of ardour than of common-sense. When we are told, for instance, that the labourers are to be restored to the soil, and when reference is made to the state of things in the fifteenth century, and when the position of men who, at the time, may have numbered three or four millions, is compared with that of a population of thirty millions, and the suggestion is made that these thirty millions should occupy the soil in the same way as the three or four millions occupied it in the fifteenth century,—gentlemen, it is extremely wrong of me—but I cannot see the common-sense of such an idea. I cannot see common-sense in putting forward views more worthy of a place in a book which I wish some of our friends would study, than of our more prosaic days—a book belonging to a century later than the fifteenth century—I mean “More’s Utopia.” Now, I have spoken of allotments. I am entirely in favour of allotments. I have never ceased to express my view that the more the system of allotments can take root in this country, the better for its welfare, the better for the social happiness of a large portion of our population. But let me illustrate my meaning as to what I call exaggerated expectations, by a medical simile. There are certain remedies—good, sound, and wholesome remedies—which may be recommended as refreshing and useful to the constitution, but which ought scarcely to be advertised in this form: “To all who are suffering from depression of spirits, from congestion of the liver, from nervous debility, from exhaustion, from spasms, from rheumatism, try Holloway’s pills.” I believe that Holloway’s pills are very good pills in themselves, but that they will not cure the whole list of diseases which they are advertised to cure;—and, similarly, when I see a particular remedy thus recommended: “To all who are suffering from depression of trade, from congestion of industries, from foreign competition, from industrial exhaustion, and all other industrial ills, come and try my grand new patent of municipal allotments,”—I say try it, but it will not cure the whole of the

maladies on the list. That is the point in which I say the advocates of these views are deficient in common-sense. They urge these panaceas far beyond the limit at which they will really be effective. Let them try a system of allotments. I agree with them in aim, as much as many of those who criticise me, but I hold the principle of the system which they urge to be open to criticism; and I further maintain that they will do harm, that they will divert the attention of the public from many other matters of the deepest importance, if they concentrate it upon a point, important in itself, but nevertheless not so important as to justify the monopoly of attention which is claimed for it.

*Allotments.*

And now, gentlemen, I wish to enter into competition with those who think that they have certain specific remedies which can be applied to those sufferings, and to those social shortcomings, which we all deplore. I repeat what I have said frequently before, that if by a revision of the land laws we can increase the number of those who are interested in the soil, we shall have done something to increase the stability of the country and the happiness of its inhabitants. But let us be a little precise. What do we mean by allotments, and what is the relation of the system of allotments to the system of peasant proprietors? By allotments do we mean, or do we not mean, gardens sufficiently large, but not larger, than will occupy the spare time of agricultural labourers and their families—the allotments, of course, in the case of a man with a numerous family being larger than those which have to be worked by one man alone? Up to the point of giving to every agricultural labourer the opportunity of having a garden by which he will increase the comfort of his family—up to that point, I heartily go with the supporters of this theory. But when we come to the question of Peasant Proprietors, I say again, if we can establish a class of peasant proprietors I shall rejoice; but I don't see at this moment how the agricultural labourer is to be transformed suddenly, or without a vast number of intermediate processes, into a peasant proprietor. Let us look at this matter like practical men. Is the agricultural labourer to depend for his subsistence upon the acres which are to be given him, or upon his weekly wages? If he is to be taken away from his present employment, and launched upon farming on his own account, I consider that we should be trying a very dangerous experiment. I do not object to it in the interest of the landlords or of the farmers,



but I want to know whether it is necessary or wise, in the interest of the agricultural labourer himself. I will tell you where the plan may succeed. It may succeed in the case of men who are not dependent entirely upon their daily work for subsistence. If by such means you can increase the number of proprietors, so much the better, but I do not as yet see the process which is to restore the agricultural labourer to the soil. Before we do so, let us be sure, not only that the soil will yield the necessary crops, but that these crops will yield the necessary price to remunerate the agricultural labourer.

But now let me submit to you some considerations of a broader *Position of* scope than those which apply to one class of the population alone. *Agriculture.* I think we run some risk that the constant arguments about school pence and allotments may divert the attention of the public, and of the Liberal party, from even larger questions having a deeper relation to the future prosperity of the people. As month after month goes by, it appears to me that the country ought to realise more clearly the dangers and the difficulties which are besetting the agricultural interest generally. There is a tremendous fall in prices, a fall useful to the consumer, unless the advantages of that fall are arrested before they reach him, as I fear is frequently the case. I won't say anything about the fall in the price of wheat except this:—In my own neighbourhood, flour is now selling at 9d. a gallon, and I am informed by working men that the difference in the price, as compared with prices even a few years ago, makes a saving in their expenditure of 1s. 6d. a week. I rejoice in that statement. Nevertheless, as regards wheat in some degree, and most articles in a much greater degree, there is a difficulty in the system of distribution. That is the chief difficulty of the present day—a problem far greater than many of those to which speakers are continually calling attention. Here are industries being ruined by the fact that the produce of their labour commands so low a price in the market, and yet, when the consumer comes to buy, he cannot get the advantage of the fall. Here is another remarkable fact. The other day a contract was made for fifteen thousand carcases of Australian sheep at 4½d. the pound, whereas I am perfectly convinced that, unless Hendon is a very much cheaper place than others, nearly 10d. a pound is being paid for legs of mutton. But, to return to the point, how are farmers, and how is land, to prosper with prices at these rates? That is the

problem which forces itself on us. Yet at the same time when the landed interest is being subjected to these severe trials from foreign competition—trials which it must endure and traverse, by whatever means it can, for no Legislature will ever put protective taxes on the food of the people,—meanwhile it has to face another class of attacks. Let us beware that we don't make matters worse by launching out into crude and ill-considered theories, to frighten those who are interested in the land—detering them from putting that capital into the soil which is necessary, not only for a good crop, but for the employment of labourers throughout the country. At this very moment, while men are anxious to plant the agricultural labourer on the soil, there is a new fear which is occupying the minds of some landlords, and of not a few amongst the farmers, and that is this: How can we go on employing the same number of labourers upon our land, if we are entirely uncertain as to the future to which we are exposed? When landlords are told that, at any moment, a municipality may come down upon them, and that the whole tenure of land is to be subjected to new principles, would it be human nature for them to come forward and employ a larger number of agricultural labourers in improving land of which they do not know that they will retain the ownership? These are practical considerations. These are considerations which cannot be lost sight of; and, believe me, a man is just as good a Liberal if he puts forward these views, and gives his attention to these difficulties, as if he ignores them and passes them by.

*Condition of  
the Labourer.*

That is the position of agriculture. In some aspects the agricultural labourer is better off than some of his comrades in towns. At all events, his wages have increased; and mark you—for this is an essential element in all the problems we are considering—the wages of the agricultural and other labourers now command a much larger amount of the necessaries and even the little luxuries of life than they have commanded at any other time; and therefore the agricultural labourer has some conditions in his favour. He has, as I have said, larger wages than he had some years ago; he has greater command of the necessaries of life. Land is cheaper, if he could buy it. He has more opportunities of thrift, and the great exertions of those who have laboured in the cause of temperance have taught him rather to lay by his money than spend it in the public-house. And so I trust that, under all these influences, the labouring man, with better wages, increased resources, cheaper food supply, and

with more thrift, greater self-respect, and greater temperance, will be able to go forward in the direction in which we all desire him to advance—namely, of becoming the owner of his own cottage, and possibly also the owner of his own plot of land.

But now, there is another system to which I should like to call special attention—a system which has already had excellent results in some quarters,—and that is co-operative farming. If agricultural labourers and others will unite, and endeavour, by acting together, to secure some of the economical advantages of the larger holdings, together with a great and valuable stimulus to individual exertion,—then, I believe, you may find the means to ensure the attainment of the object we all have at heart,—the increased interest of the public in the land. I see a great future for co-operation; and, mind you, co-operation has this advantage, that it gets over some of the difficulties involved in capital being necessary for the individual labourer. Give the individual labourer a farm on which he has to live: how is he to exist during the six or nine months before he can sell his crops? And as to the system of loans to a labourer, with two or three or four acres of land, it is extremely complicated. But if you can bring the labourers together, if in a community you can find a number of working men who can unite and try the co-operative system of farming,—in such a movement, I confess, I should see great hopes. For my own part, I have always thought, that in voluntary co-operation you have the real antidote of compulsory communism. If men will act together, with a fellow-feeling for each other, in voluntary associations,—not only may you achieve the best material results, but you will have created a tone which will be far higher and better than the feeling of confidence in any local government, or reliance on any municipality in the world. I want the British communities, both across the seas and at home, to give to all the world an example of self-reliance. I have put lance in rest in support of this principle, and I have denounced the view that you have simply to look to society, or to municipalities, or to local government. I have maintained against all comers that by voluntary association greater triumphs and more lasting good will certainly be secured.

Gentlemen, I had wished to say something to you this evening upon the question of the Depression of Trade, as it affects other industries besides that of agriculture; because I hold that it is our

*Foreign Com-  
petition and  
Industrial  
Education.*

bounden duty to see how the springs of the aggregate industries of the country may be kept running to such a degree that the whole of our prosperity may not suffer from drought. We must not look to one interest alone. We may labour for the agricultural community—and let us labour in their behalf with all the energy of which we are capable—but let us also look to the position of trade in the large towns; let us look to the conditions under which we can best hope to meet that foreign competition which is said to be weighing so heavily upon almost every branch of commerce and production. I cannot detain you by explaining the various respects in which I think we have lost some of the advantages which we formerly enjoyed. But the more we lose some of these advantages, the more let us cling to the other advantages which we retain, and the more let us see to it that we augment our facilities for beating the foreigner in every direction where improvement seems possible. How can we do this? There is one step on which we shall all unite—in which, I trust, all Liberals and Conservatives will unite—and that is to increase the capacity of our industrial population by education. That is an essential point. While we concentrate our attention upon pence paid for primary education, let us not forget that there is another education upon which the industrial future of this country may depend. I refer specially to technical and industrial education. If it is necessary that the State should lend its great power and organization, that it should lend its assistance, in order to develop a perfect system of primary education, I venture to think that it is as necessary to step in in the interests of education between fourteen and eighteen, as it is to relieve the working-classes of the cost of education between five and fourteen. We must look to more continuous education. We must enlist the working-classes in its favour. We must not only think of increasing the material resources of the working-classes by artificial means of raising their income—but we must take care that this country shall retain such a position on the industrial stage of the world, that our working men shall be fully employed in all our manufactures. Some men look chiefly to the distribution of existing wealth. For my part, I think that all statesmen, that all men who are interested in the future well-being of our vast population, should rather look to an increasing flow of the springs from which prosperity may be diffused in a continuous and broadening stream over the whole face of our land. For my part, while others look

to the division of the spoils, I shall take up a position in defence of the wells.

Beware, too, that the channels of irrigation be not blocked, that liberty of trade be in no way interfered with. Liberty of trade would be better expressed by the words "liberty of exchange," which is the French translation of our word Free-trade. Now, I wish to sound a note of warning. Let us take care that, while on the one hand we defend our system of liberty of trade against "fair" trade, we don't, on the other, adopt a system which limits freedom of property, freedom of ownership, freedom of labour. Let men be warned that, in some of the modern theories of the day, principles lie concealed which strike at that liberty of exchange which is at the bottom of the prosperity of the country. Freedom of exchange may be attacked from two different quarters; and you will see on the Continent that there are no fiercer opponents of freedom of trade and freedom of exchange than those who are in favour of the limitation of the rights of ownership, and of regulation by means of the State. Defend your liberty, from whichever side the attack may come.

I must not detain you longer to-night, though that freedom of exchange, on which I have just touched, is a very tempting field. Shall I be charged here, too, that I am showing scepticism, while, in truth, I am exposing heresy. Let me tell you what I have dinned into the ears of all the audiences to which I have been speaking, that if there are some of us who are not content to acclaim the specific remedies now proposed for the cure of all our social difficulties and disorders, it is not because we are indifferent, it is not because we are idle, it is not because we are sceptical. Why, some of us even twenty years ago were pioneers in that movement by which tens of thousands of the industrial classes in the metropolis have been better housed. Some of us were pioneers in the movement which raised the education of the children of the poorer portion of the middle class, and, by the reorganization of middle-class schools, brought excellent teaching at the cheapest possible rate within the means of thousands of families, to whom low fees at a high-class school were a priceless boon. Many of us have taken part in legislation intended to strengthen those Friendly Societies which have developed the thrift of British working men, and to which I trust we may look much in the future, and from which we

*Liberty of  
Trade essen-  
tial.*

*Past Work  
and Present  
Accusations.*

may hope to find much resistance to dangerous doctrines. Remember, too, that it is not more than fifteen years ago since many of us inaugurated that new system of elementary education—which has already exercised a vast influence for the good of the whole population. I will not weary you by reciting all the work which has been done by the Liberals of the old school. We have worked at the administration of the poor law; we have endeavoured to mitigate the evils of that fearful system which appals the feelings of every man; we have studied the means to rescue pauper children from the contaminating effects of their workhouse life; we have laboured at a system, under which we should so bring up the children of paupers and inmates of workhouses that they might live a more wholesome and natural village life, and become useful members of the village community in their time. We have, in a hundred ways, done what we could—we, the older members of the Liberal party—to advance the social prosperity of all classes of the community. The labourers who come in at the eleventh hour may claim their penny, and the older labourers who have toiled long will not grudge them their reward. But let these older labourers not be told that they have not toiled at all, and that they are not entitled to the modest recompense of their countrymen's regard.

*“Arm-chair  
Politicians.”*

Gentlemen, I have assumed that the audience which I am addressing this evening is, if I may say so, a fair sample of the Liberal party at large. I have assumed that it embraces various schools of political thought. I have assumed that probably some are here who may belong to what is called the more ardent and advanced party. I assume that there are also a number of gentlemen in this room, whom their fellow Liberals would playfully call by the name of “arm-chair politicians.” Well, what does that mean? What do you mean by an arm-chair politician? Does it mean this, that those who are so called, somewhat resemble the physician who remains at home, who prescribes for his patients, who studies all the causes of disease, and who, by means of careful diagnosis, recommends the remedy which he thinks will best strengthen the constitution of his patient,—while the advanced politician is the surgeon who goes forth to amputate limbs? Is that the difference? Does the difference consist in the degree of activity, or in the form of activity? I think, on the whole, it is meant that the test is the degree of activity; and if so, I acknowledge

it is a just reproach. Men have no business in these days to sit at home at ease, and they must not complain if in that case they are abused, or if they are thrust aside,—for, unless they exert themselves, they must lose influence and power. Never, so far as I can remember, has the country required more the active interposition of all classes, of all men who care for the country's interests. Never would indifference, political indifference, be in my eyes a more guilty fault. There may be rough work before us. The work may soon be rougher even than it is at present; but Heaven forbid that, terrible as the temptation may be, any class should be bored into the idea of neglecting their political functions. I say, then, that all must come forward and perform their duties to the State,—and bring your charge—you will justly bring your charge—against men who dally in idleness, while such great arguments are being conducted throughout the land. I saw it suggested, that the man at the plough might complain, if the lolling spectator were to scold him for the manner in which he was performing his allotted duty. Yes, I will acknowledge that if the man who scolds is merely a lolling spectator who stands aside, then the action of that spectator will justify bad language on the part of the man at the plough. But if the man who remonstrates is a fellow-servant with the man at the plough, if he is working in the same field, if he has studied the same soil,—then if he sees that the ploughing is not such as to go deep enough into the soil, it will not only be his right, but it will be his duty, to inform their common master of the fact. I wish to be sure that in the ploughing of the soil which is now being performed the plough may go deep enough, and that the furrows may so be drawn that the soil may bear fruit, under the shining sun of truth, the vivifying breezes of public opinion, and the searching harrow of fair and honest criticism. It is in that spirit that all must work for our common country which is our common master. Let us look to it that the seed which is now being thrown into the soil is sound and good and clean.

## VII.

Delivered in Brighton on the 4th November 1885.

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*The Multitude  
of Speeches.*

MR. GOSCHEN said—I thank you heartily, my Fellow-Liberals in the county of Sussex, for the magnificent reception which you have given me this evening. The electoral campaign in which we are at present engaged has indeed laid a severe burden upon all who have thrown themselves heartily into it. The strain has been severe, and the labour has been protracted; but, speaking of myself and of my personal experience, I can most truly say that every time that I have been brought into contact with such audiences of my countrymen as I see here before me to-night, I have met with such a warm welcome that it has fired me with fresh courage, and has given me fresh energy and fresh zest, to perform those duties which the nation demands of those who enrol themselves in its service. I am not surprised that the able writers in the Press, who every day in the week are bombarded at about one o'clock in the morning with speeches arriving on telegraphic tapes from all parts of the country, have had a surfeit of talk. They are trained politicians, and they know as much as, and often more than, the candidates they are condemned to read. Nevertheless, I think that the discussion which has been carried on has been indispensable. So long as we were engaged upon what one may, I hope not irreverently, call the stock subjects of politics, so long as we had to deal with matters which had been debated for years in every debating society, and with which we were familiar from our boyhood upwards—so long, perhaps, there was no need, not so much need at least, for that distracting process which has been going on. But the ventilation of new topics, the fact that new proposals crowd to the front, the fact that the nation is called upon to decide upon many new issues with which we are not so familiar,—these facts increase the necessity



for statesmen and politicians to throw themselves with energy into the arena of controversy ; and, whatever may be the sufferings of the writers of the Press, I do not think that the audiences, so far, have been fatigued.

I am speaking in a place and upon a platform which remind me forcibly of a noble lord who stood here not many weeks ago. I am reminded of a speech delivered here by Lord Salisbury—a speech which I read with much attention. Lord Salisbury spoke of the various sections of the Liberal party, and, with regard to what he called Whig orators, he stated that they had not said that the Conservatives had done anything wrong, nor that they were doing anything wrong, but that their suspicions as to the innate character of the Conservatives made them believe that they would go wrong. No, no, Lord Salisbury, that will not do. It is true, I have endeavoured during this campaign rather to fix my own mind, and the minds of those whom I was addressing, upon those most important questions which lie before us, than on what lies behind. I thought that we were living in times when we had better abstain from barren recriminations, and that those of us were doing the best service to the State who concentrated our minds and our speeches upon the questions of the day ; but it would be taking an unfair advantage of that process if noble lords should therefore proclaim that we dared not say that they have done wrong. As for myself, my very earliest recollection of Parliament is of Lord Salisbury, then Lord Robert Cecil, having done extremely wrong ; and my very last recollection of Parliament is of Lord Salisbury and his party having done extremely wrong. I am not going to detain you by stating in what respects between these two intervals they have done wrong. But as for the first occasion, I remember it well, because it was when I first won my Parliamentary spurs, and I thought it extremely wrong of Lord Robert Cecil to oppose in a bitter speech my maiden motion for nationalising the universities, and throwing them open to all creeds. And then there is my last Parliamentary recollection. It is of Lord Salisbury suffering his colleagues in the House of Commons, over whom, I presume, he exercises some control, to sneer down the splendid services of Lord Spencer in Ireland amid the tumultuous cheers of the Irish Nationalist party—a scene which burnt itself into the memory of those Liberals who were present, and which, I think, will not be forgotten by the Liberals who were not present on that occasion.

*Lord Salisbury  
in the Past  
and Present.*

I do not wish, even after the challenge which has been thrown down, to deal with the past. But Lord Salisbury said, "See what we are doing now." Well, I wonder what they are doing? Parliament is not in session, and we are not able to subject Ministers to the cross-examination, under which the late Government conducted its affairs. We do not know what they are doing now. But even if I did know what they were doing, would that be sufficient, when we remember that now the Conservatives are acting in a minority, acting as a Government on sufferance? I decline to accept their proceedings, when they have not got a majority behind them as a guarantee for what they would do if they had got a majority in their favour. I remember how Lord Beaconsfield, when twitted for doing what was not in accordance with the traditions of his party, said, "Ah! you should see what I would do if I had got a majority of a hundred behind me." I want to know what the Conservative Government would do with a majority behind them. What they are doing now is really of comparatively little importance to us as a guide to their general disposition.

*The Conserva-  
tives and  
Ireland.*

But if I do not wish to prolong the controversy as to what they are doing now, I want to know what they are going to do, and I want to be instructed upon some points, on which neither the speech of Lord Salisbury at Newport, nor the speech of Lord Salisbury at Brighton, have thrown light—a light which I think the country had a right to expect from the words of one who is now Prime Minister. Has Lord Salisbury, or have his colleagues, explained to us sufficiently what is their policy, and what are their views, with regard to the question which has overshadowed all other issues—the question of Ireland, and the connection between Ireland and England? The Conservative speakers think that we ought to be satisfied now with what they have said with regard to obstruction, and they declare that our object—which is simply to secure the efficiency of Parliament—is directed to the stifling of debate. What we want to prevent is the stifling of the House of Commons. We want to protect the efficiency of Parliament to perform the duties which the Empire will place upon it. And why have we raised this point? Not on account even of the overworked condition of Parliament, but because it has been announced, in an authoritative form by Mr. Parnell, the leader of the Irish party, what their attitude will be, if this country does not accede to their demands. I have not seen what answer has been given to this menace by

any Conservative yet. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has made two speeches within the last three or four days, but not by a single word, so far as I can learn, did he refer to that which is of such deep interest to the United Kingdom and to the Empire at this moment—namely, the state of Ireland, and the methods by which it will be necessary to deal with it. I do not think that Lord Salisbury, when standing upon this platform, by one single sentence, threw any light upon the question.

Now, during the last week or ten days, we have read of a move-  
 ment which has been developed in Ireland—the Loyal and Patriotic Union. (Cheers, and a voice, “Landlords.”) I hear some one say “Landlords.” I hear of the Union that it includes not only landlords; no, there are Loyalists of all classes in Ireland. They are men of all classes, and men of all parties; but they declare that they will not allow themselves to be dictated to in every electoral struggle, in every electoral division of Ireland, by the despotic supremacy of one man. Every class in Ireland is suffering under this despotism. Men may not buy or sell, or conduct any operation of life, without the leave and licence of the National League. I hear that in many places unless men buy tickets, on a settled scale, to swell the subscriptions from America which are subsidising the Nationalist party, they may be hindered in their business, and be cruelly boycotted, and be liable to penalties of every kind. That is the picture of Ireland at this present moment; and when brave men come forward and say, almost carrying their lives in their hands,—“We will fight this despotism,”—I say they deserve the sympathy of every one who is attached to his country—the sympathy of every public man. And yet, not by one word have I seen that that movement has been recognised by a single Conservative statesman. The country ought to cry shame on the party, on whichever side of the Speaker’s chair it may sit, that turns its eyes towards the Separatist vote for the purpose of party advantage.

We are told that Ireland is to manage its own affairs. How? What does this mean? We find the analogy of Norway and Sweden sometimes quoted, and the analogy of Austria and Hungary. I warn you against being misled by analogies of that kind. Norway and Sweden are bound together by one common danger—by the near neighbourhood of the empire of the Czar. That is a strong influence to keep them together. Then look at Austria and

*Irish Loyalists  
deserving of  
Sympathy.*

Hungary. Hungary stands in the midst of Slav neighbours, and must rely upon her union with Austria in order to secure herself from being swallowed up by her neighbours of different nationalities. Neither of these two counteracting influences would you have in the case of Ireland. More than that, I wish to call attention to another point. It is one of supreme importance. Between England and Ireland, the difference is not only one of race; but at the present moment, upon almost every question connected with property, upon every question connected with contracts, and almost as regards the very constitution of society, there is an entire difference of opinion. The Norwegian and the Swede may be of different nationalities, belonging to different provinces, but I doubt whether they have a totally different view of the rights of property. The Austrians and Hungarians may be of different nationalities, but I have not heard of Hungarians wishing to upset the whole constitution of society in their country. You will see, therefore, that we have not only to deal with this difference of race, but we are asked to entrust a people with the entire management of their home affairs, whose leaders have called an important class of their countrymen robbers, and who are prepared to act upon that view. I would ask, what kind of laws the Irish Separatist party are to be allowed to pass as dealing with purely Irish affairs? Suppose they were to enact a law of this kind, "Whereas judicial rents were fixed at a time when produce was 20 per cent. higher than it is now, be it hereby enacted that those rents be reduced by 50 per cent." Well, is that an Irish affair, or is it an Imperial affair? Do the Irish demand that they should be allowed to pass measures of that kind without the interference of the English Parliament; and if that is so, who is to present laws of such a kind to the Sovereign? Are we to allow the Irish, under a National Council, to go direct to the Crown, and ask the assent of the Sovereign to measures which no Sovereign could sign? Are we to attempt to remove that buffer which the Imperial Parliament and the Imperial Cabinet constitute between the Separatist party and the Crown? Unless we are content to leave to a body in Ireland, manipulated by these men, whose views we know, because they have but too plainly avowed them—unless we are content to place at their merey the whole property and the liberty of all classes in Ireland—I say we shall have no right to give any separate

*Real Meaning  
of Home Rule.*

legislature a power to deal with these matters in such a manner that there should be no control by any responsible authority in the United Kingdom. As for Elective National Councils, believe me, they do not afford a halting-place, or, if so, but a brief halting-place—before these larger powers are reached. Mr. Parnell has been extremely candid upon that point. He has called them, if correctly reported, a separate Parliament all but in name. No; we must know what is wanted; we must remember that what is demanded is not only that Irishmen shall “manage their own affairs.” I wish that to a larger extent they could manage their own affairs. I would be prepared to go far in that direction, seeing the immense advantages which would thereby accrue. But if these men say, “We want to have the land for those to whom it does not belong, without paying the price to those to whom it belongs,” there is but one answer to that which can be returned—“You cannot have it unless you pay for it.”

It is of no use whatever, with the folly of an ostrich, to blind ourselves to the facts before us. We must see that what is demanded is not only a separate legislature as regards race, but the establishment of entirely separate powers as regards the principles upon which the whole foundation of society rests. I confess that upon these subjects I have not seen utterances from Conservative statesmen which convey to my mind the feeling that they recognise the enormous danger with which we are confronted. You will pardon me, I am sure, if I have thought it necessary to dwell for some little time upon this point. English audiences must not suffer themselves to feel bored by these allusions to the danger. We must not drift into disaster; and for my part I say that before any measures are passed vitally affecting the legislative union between the two countries, the issue ought to be submitted to the country itself, and ought to be debated throughout the length and breadth of the land; and every constituency ought to demand a severe reckoning from its representative if he suffers himself to drift on a question such as this.

*A Distinct  
Issue for the  
Country.*

Let me now take you to a subject nearer, perhaps, to yourselves, but not of more importance to the Empire at large. It is another subject on which, it appears to me, the utterances of the Conservative party are singularly unsatisfactory—the question of Fair *versus* Free Trade. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach complained that Mr. Gladstone did not allude in his Manifesto to the Depression of Trade.

Well, it is a curious fact, but neither did Lord Salisbury allude to the question of the Depression of Trade in *his* speech. The Chancellor of the Exchequer was giving a backhander to his own chief. I want to know this, have the Conservatives got an unauthorised programme as regards Fair Trade, of which the Prime Minister, when at Brighton, was ignorant? I do not think we must judge of their views only by the speeches of their chiefs. We must judge them also by the speeches of the various candidates, and by the character of the literature with which we are all familiar, and which is called "Leaflets"—though why so tender and poetic a name should be given to this rather coarse growth of electioneering literature, I confess I do not know. Well, these leaflets are continually putting forward doctrines of a very queer character. It has been suggested to me that these leaflets are doing considerable harm, and I was asked, "What can you suggest as the remedy against them?" My answer is, and I wish all

*The Revival  
of Protection.*

Free Traders—I wonder how many in this room are not Free Traders—(cries of "none")—to note it: we must furbish up our arguments. We must not take it for granted that we shall prevail without being conscious of the principles and arguments upon which we are acting. It is constantly suggested, that it is indifference to the depression of trade which has made many of us decline to serve on the Royal Commission. Nothing could be more absurd. From a statistical point of view, it is possible that the Royal Commission may do something. But it is not a question of evidence, but a question of doctrine and principle, as to what is to be done when you arrive at certain facts. For my part, I am not prepared to admit, if evidence shows that certain branches of our trade are declining, that therefore we ought to impose retaliatory duties. What is urged by most Conservative speakers, indirectly by the wiser, directly by the more foolish, is, that we should maintain our command over foreign tariffs by making bargains with foreign countries with respect to our own. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach said, that he was not inclined to impose duties upon food. I am not surprised to hear it! I should like to hear what the Bristol electors would have said if he had proposed a duty upon food. Nor is he prepared to recommend the imposition of a duty upon raw material. There he stops; but he does not say that he is not prepared to recommend the imposition of duties upon manufactured articles imported into this kingdom. I note the point at which the Chancellor of the Exchequer stops.

But now let me in a very few sentences point out to you that the cause of Free Trade would be very much stronger than it is now—though I hope that it is even now strong—if the whole population realised sufficiently the enormous cheapening of almost all articles of consumption through the operation of Free Trade. What is the case of the Fair Traders? In one word—and their case is contained in a nutshell—they mean to make things dearer. They do not like the prevailing cheapness, and they say that we must make things dearer which we produce and sell. But I say that you cannot make things dearer that we produce and sell without making things dearer which we eat and drink and wear. Now why is it that the country has not sufficiently realised the enormous cheapening of articles of consumption which has been brought about by Free Trade? It is because a due proportion of the benefit caused by the fall in prices has not reached the consumer. The sufferings of the farmer have been intense, but the wheat and the meat which he produces, and sells at a lower price, have not reached the consumer at anything like the same proportional fall in price. As I have said elsewhere, there is something here radically defective in our system of distribution. But even now economic laws are at work which are gradually cheapening, by an irresistible process, the first articles of necessity for the working man; and so far as we can promote the process of those economic laws, by discussion and by the exposition of facts, let us do so. Our bounden duty is so to do. Let me give you an instance of what is happening already. I heard of it the other day. A farmer in Yorkshire had bought some Irish cattle, for which the butchers refused to give him £8, 10s., though they had cost him more than that including their keep. So he thought he would not accept the situation. He killed the Irish beasts himself, he sold the meat at about the market price at which the butchers were selling, or a little below it, and he realized, not £8, 10s., but £12 per beast. I know of a parallel case in my own neighbourhood. Farmers are being ruined by the great fall in the price of sheep; and I know a farmer who could not sell his sheep at 34s., so he thought he would kill them and sell them himself. He killed them, and sold, not at the butchers' price, but at 8d. per lb., and he realized, not 34s., but 40s. for some and 48s. for others. And mark this—who were the purchasers? Men went and bought their mutton who seldom bought mutton at all. The fall in the price of meat had this effect, that

*The Fall of  
Prices and the  
Consumer.*

Sussex labourers, who, as a rule, could only afford to have butchers' meat on Sunday, were able on week days to change their bacon for mutton at a reasonable price; and in this way hard economic laws—those laws so derided in the present day—those laws of supply and demand—had as a result that the hungry were filled with good things, and were not sent empty away! No; let us stand by the cheapness of all that we need.

*Inconsistencies  
of Fair Trade.*

But what is the argument that you will have to urge in reply to the Conservative argument, "We do not intend to tax food; we intend to tax importations to this country—not even the raw materials, but manufactured articles—it is thus we intend to remove the depression of trade?" (Hear, hear.) Very well! Are you going to tax luxuries; or are you going to tax general commodities? I heard some one say, "Hear, hear," and I should like him to answer this question: If you only tax luxuries, what good will you do to the cotton industries and other great industries of the country? You may get a small revenue by such means, but you will not cure the depression in trade. If, on the other hand, you tax the staples of these great industries, if you tax imported iron, then is the farmer who has produced his wheat, in competition with the wheat producer in America and India, to pay for a protected steam plough at a higher price? Is he, through the protective system, to be compelled to pay more for his agricultural implements? Is he to pay higher for all that he needs, and then not have protection for himself? In the name of everything like common-sense, how is this Fair Trade! I call it the most unfair trade in the world. I call it unfair to protect certain industries in the country and leave the others unprotected.

I believe there is a gentleman not unconnected with Brighton, who suggests that lead should be protected in order to increase the price. Then, is the farmer who wants lead for his roofs, to pay a protective price to the miner in Cornwall, while he is to have no advantage in connection with the wheat he produces himself? Such an argument will not hold water for one moment. We have experience on these matters. Where protection prevails as it does in Germany, there is the most furious jealousy among classes as to what industry is to be protected. The landowners and farmers say, "We must have protection, if the other classes have protection." And so it becomes a war of interests. There are lobbyings of every kind, and alliances are formed, not upon politi-



cal grounds, but upon the grounds of pecuniary interest, and that which ruins the prosperity, is at the same time ruining the Parliament, of Germany. That is the result of your Fair Trade and the protection of some industries, while others are left unprotected. No; the great fabric of sound economy is not such that you can take out one plank without bringing the whole edifice to the ground. You must defend the edifice as it stands; and all who care for economic truth must remember that nearly all the parts hold together. No true Free Trader can be a regulator of prices by legislation; he must recognise the principle of competition, and he must see—and it must be the duty of all economists to show—how the competition, which doubtless exists, can be carried on so as to end victoriously for the country to which we belong.

I know that we are placed on our mettle. I acknowledge to the full the great progress of foreign competition. I see that many of the old privileges and the old advantages which this country possessed in conducting her commerce may be passing from us. We must keep our eye on those which we retain. We must face the circumstances under which our industrial and commercial activity must in the future be carried on. What are those conditions? Let me look at some of them. Our industry must be conducted under favourable sanitary conditions. We must endeavour to keep it employed upon cheap raw material. We must take care that our routes of communication with foreign markets remain open to us. We must take care that our possessions remain inviolate. We must take care that we do not frighten capital away. We must take care to establish as cordial relations as possible between labour and capital; and we must look to this, that our workmen shall have such opportunities of education, technical and otherwise, as may enable them to compete more effectually with their comrades on the continent. In the progress of technical education I see much hope, but I also see a necessity for further and continuous national effort. We must lighten, too, so far as we can, the aggregate burden of taxation. These are the conditions under which we must attempt to carry on the industry of the country.

There is one argument which is frequently used by Protectionists, to which I do not think we ought to be entirely blind. They say that to discourage the growth of wheat and other cereals at home is to that extent to be dependent upon the foreigner, because, they say, See the position to which we shall be reduced in a state

*By the Main-  
tenance of our  
Naval  
Supremacy ;*

of war! That brings me to a point on which I, in common, I trust, with many Liberals, have a strong opinion. I hold that Free Trade absolutely requires that we should be thoroughly well protected by a mighty navy at sea. A country which imports as much as we do, which sells as much as we do to foreign nations, must know that her navy is able to cope with every duty that may be placed upon it. Now, here is a third point which I miss much in Conservative speeches. When the Liberals are in office, it is necessary for Conservative tradition to have a naval scare every five years. The Conservatives are now in office themselves, and I want to know, I should like to be told, what they think of the present condition of our navy, as regards the number of our ships, and the condition of our coaling stations. I have not seen that Lord George Hamilton, or any Conservative orator, has ever stated that they would be obliged to appeal to the country for any increased estimates, but it will be a very curious coincidence indeed if they come forward with that cry immediately they are in a minority. How do they find the country situated? They talk, and talk wisely, of the necessity for better organisation. But do they think that that will do the job? Do they think that that is enough? Do they think that, looking to the number of our ships, we have enough to cope with every possible combination against us? If not, it is their duty to say so now that they are responsible, and not afterwards when they have ceased to be responsible.

Let them tell the country what is necessary. Do not let them shrink from the duty of stating, "We shall want further sums, if we remain in office, to strengthen the Navy." If that is their idea, let them come out with it. Let them tell the electors. The electors of this country will not be shabby as regards the Navy. They know what depends upon the Navy. When we see that even a poor country like Italy considers it indispensable to strengthen her navy, when we see that democratic France has thought it necessary to increase her expenditure by millions on the navy, it is not a time for this country to grudge any sums that may be necessary. Remember, our existence as Free-traders, and in many other senses, depends on this country remaining mistress of the seas. And this leads me to another point upon which I should wish to be allowed to say a word or two, I mean a question closely connected with the Navy—namely, foreign policy. Well,

now, I wonder how many persons in this hall would say, "What are foreign affairs to us?" I will tell you if you will allow me. Foreign affairs are the affairs of our customers; foreign affairs are the affairs of our purveyors; foreign affairs are the affairs of nations through which our great routes of communication pass; and the grower of hops in Sussex might as well say that he has no concern with the beer-consuming towns in the north of England, or the manufacturers of Manchester might as well say that they have no concern with the affairs of those to whom they send their goods, as this country could say that it has no concern with foreign affairs. The coal miners in the North of England surely have a great interest in the railways which convey the product of their labour to the fireplaces in London; and so those who manufacture English goods, or even the British housewives, who want Chinese tea, are all interested in keeping open the highways of that British commerce, upon which the prosperity of this country is based. It is not true, therefore, to say, that we have no concern with foreign affairs. I have treated this question from the lowest standpoint. I have not spoken to you of the duties which a country like ours owes to subject races. I have not spoken to you of our duty to watch those great Foreign Powers, whom I myself am not Utopian enough to think ought not to be watched with the greatest care. I think that we ought to watch their combinations and their movements with constant solicitude. Therefore I bespeak the attention of every man to our foreign affairs, not for the purpose of national glory, but for the sake of national existence, of national prosperity, and of national honour.

And how do I wish that this foreign policy should be carried on? What are the characteristics that Liberals would wish to see distinguishing our foreign policy? They are clean-handedness, continuity, and courage. All these three characteristics I claim as necessary for our foreign policy. Remember the enormous advantages which foreign countries enjoy who can give anything like a continuous direction to their foreign policy. Do not let us lose more than is absolutely necessary of that advantage. For my part, I should rejoice if we could lift this great question of foreign policy above the recriminations of party, and make it the subject of a "Loyal and Patriotic Union." At present we suffer disas-

trously from the want of continuity, and from foreign questions being made the subject of party animosity.

Let me give you an instance of the difficulties which party animosity introduces into our foreign policy. Take the mission upon which Sir Henry Drummond Wolff is now engaged. I venture to say that if that mission had been put upon a Liberal, and Parliament had been sitting, it would have been foredoomed to failure from the very first. Why? Because Sir Drummond Wolff himself would have put the Minister of the day to such a cross-examination with regard to the intentions implied in such a mission that the whole matter would have become impossible of execution. Ministers have been—you will excuse a Scotch term—"heckled" in Parliament to an extent which I believe has been most detrimental to the interests of the country. Look at this as practical men. If day after day you are pressed prematurely to reveal an intention and give a premature pledge in these complex foreign affairs, and in the end, in very weariness, you give it, the next day you may find that you have made a mistake, and that the pledge ought never to have been given. The insistence upon premature pledges is full of danger for the common good. Take the unfortunate events in the Soudan. Night after night Conservatives pressed Her Majesty's Government at the time to say what their policy would be, in certain eventualities, with regard to the Soudan. At last they elicited most reluctant pledges, and those reluctant pledges afterwards embarrassed the action of Mr. Gladstone's Government, and contributed, I am convinced, in no

*By Continuity  
in our Foreign  
Policy,*

slight degree to the disasters which occurred. If in our foreign policy we could, as we used to do, show a more united front to the world, the addition to our power would be immense; and I entreat all my countrymen to consider whether it is not possible to restore such a continuity of policy. I think the present is not a bad moment to resume that identity of purpose in our foreign policy which has been too much discarded. I wish to say this without party recrimination of any kind. The Liberals have lately attacked the Conservatives for carrying out their policy, and the Conservatives used to attack the Liberals for carrying out *their* policy. The fact is, that fate is too strong for either party, and both parties must act according to certain necessities which are imposed on the defenders of the interests of this country, upon whichever side they are. What is the situation at this moment?

Lord Salisbury—I forget whether in this room or at Newport—gave utterance to sentiments with regard to Turkey which might have been uttered by Mr. Gladstone himself. Whether those sentiments were agreeable to Turkey or not I do not know, but, at all events, they expressed the traditional policy of the Liberal party. They involved the principle that Turkish authority should only be maintained where it is in harmony with the interests of subject races; and Lord Salisbury has now also expressed his interest in the rising nationalities of the East, for whom the Liberal party have always shown such sympathy. Here, therefore, is a chance of union and of possible continuity.

Again, with regard to Afghanistan, both parties are now united. Both parties insist that India must be defended at all cost. They are united in this—that any further Russian advance must be resisted. Here, again, we may therefore hope that those differences which paralysed the arm of England in the face of Europe may have been removed. And so in the case of Egypt. We know little of what is passing with regard to the mission of Sir H. Drummond Wolff, but we see that the Conservative party have accepted the principle of the evacuation of Egypt, and the abandonment of any designs for a protectorate of any kind. We may differ as to the time for the evacuation—and there are points of detail on which the two parties will always differ—but, seeing that on these two broad issues there is less difference of opinion than there has been for many years, I trust that the time has come when, in the interest of our influence abroad, we may find the United Kingdom will present a united and unanimous front wherever British interests are concerned.

You will remember that I was speaking of the conditions under which the industry of this country might best be carried on, and I spoke of the necessity of defending it by our Navy; and I spoke also of defending it by the adoption of a firm, a courageous, and, at the same time, a clean-handed foreign policy. As regards our Colonies, I trust all sections of the country have come to the conclusion that they must be met with sympathetic treatment in every possible way. They will be repelled by weakness and vacillation; they will be attracted by firmness and sympathy. So, again, let us hope that in our colonial policy, as in our foreign policy, there may be continuity. What disasters have not happened in South Africa because we have continually changed our

*And in the  
Treatment of  
our Colonies;*

minds—sometimes thinking we would place all power in the hands of our fellow-subjects at the Cape, at other times thinking we must retain the influence and the supreme power in our own hands! Sometimes we have thought we must protect the natives, at other times we have thought we must leave the matter to the Ministers of the Cape. Let the country make up its mind, both in the interest of the Colony and of the United Kingdom. Let there be no vacillation. It is this vacillation which has lost us our position in foreign affairs; and in this both parties may have been to blame. What I want to see is continuity. Let us know what we want, and then steadily, like sensible men, work to the attainment of the objects we set before us.

*By Sound  
Finance;*

Only one sentence, gentlemen, about a further condition which I should like to see observed in our competition with foreign countries. I allude to the scale of public expenditure and taxation. I belong to the old-fashioned people who believe that retrenchment of expenditure ought still to remain one of the cardinal points of the Liberal creed. It is a matter of concern to all those in this room who have anything that can be taxed; and not only they, but those in this room who work with their hands are equally concerned to see that the aggregate taxation of the country should not be excessive. You may think that you can shift the burden of taxation from one set of shoulders to another; but, however you may readjust it, a high expenditure and heavy taxation handicap a country against other nations with whom it has to compete. That is one of the first principles to be observed; and I trust that I may put in a humble plea that economy should not be entirely dethroned from the position it has hitherto occupied in Liberal doctrine.

*By the  
Organisation  
of Secondary  
Education:*

I should have liked to say something upon a point of supreme importance, which I alluded to in one sentence before, the question of Technical and Secondary Education. I think that the chief result of the inquiries made by the Royal Commission into the Depression of Trade will be the conviction that it is necessary to develop, far more than we have thus far done, the instruction of working men and others in this country. There is room in the field of Education for the competition of statesmen of different schools. I know there are some who have set their eyes exclusively upon primary education, but that is not enough. We may bestow the boon of education as a free gift up to the age of fourteen, but if

the mass of those who learn are never again to come under the hands of the schoolmaster, if there is not an organized system building up the ladder of Education for those who choose to climb, from the age of seven up to the age of manhood, you will not be able to compete with the highly-trained workmen of Switzerland and Saxony. And this point illustrates one of the cardinal principles in all my political thought, I mean that solidarity of interests between various classes, which is sometimes overlooked. The secondary education of those who stand above the workmen—of the foremen, the clerks, the master manufacturers—is a matter of deep interest to the workmen themselves. All those who direct these manufactories, all those who place men at work, ought to be acquainted, as much as any foreigner, with the latest inventions of the day, with everything connected with chemistry, and the other sciences that may bear upon the industry in which they are concerned. And therefore again I say, it is not a question of classes, it is a matter of interest to the whole community, that secondary education also should be taken in hand by the State. Organisation is a legitimate function of the State, and one by which it can usefully supplement individual efforts. I wish to see sufficient high school accommodation in every district to meet its wants. I wish to see a system built up by which, from an elementary school, you can pass to the secondary school, and by which members of all classes may rise to the position to which their abilities entitle them. In these days there is no monopoly for the manufacture of unauthorised programmes, and I venture to put forward, as my humble contribution, the suggestion that the secondary education of the nation is especially worthy of the attention of a reformed Parliament.

There remains one other condition as regards the conduct of industry on which I would say a word. It is a dry subject, but important. I mean sanitary legislation. It is of enormous importance to us to know whether that great sanitary movement which has been going on has resulted, as it ought to have resulted, in increased health and strength among all classes of the population. We have suffered under it to a certain extent. There is a vast staff of inspectors—"nuisance men"—they call them in the Sussex villages. They have knelt at our wells, they have smelt at our drains, they have visited our workshops and manufactories, and now that we have spent great sums of money on sanitary improve-

*By Good  
Sanitary Con-  
ditions.*

ments, I want to know, in making up our national balance-sheet, whether we are to put down increased health and strength as an asset on the right side? I certainly believe that we may put down the increased health and strength of the population as an asset secured by the labour we have bestowed and the expenditure we have made, and that we have thus by this sanitary legislation increased even the "material resources of the poor;" for if the working-man, by such sanitary methods, is saved twenty days' illness on an average in the year, he has increased his wages by a proportionate amount. I hope we may believe that many have been able to curtail their doctor's bills, and that those who either have not known a doctor's bill before, or do not know it now, will find that with better air and better water, and other better conditions of life, they are able to do a better day's work than before. If that were not so, then, indeed, our expenditure would have been for nothing. If that were not so, we should have placed additional burdens upon the country without having secured for it additional results. I call attention to the question for this reason—that, looking at the expenditure which has been incurred, we are too apt to ignore the credit side of the account as compared with the debit side of it. On the whole, we have, I believe, improved the general health, and have thus strengthened the arms engaged in our manufactures. Doubtless the factory legislation of late years, which curtailed the number of hours of work, has been most beneficial, but if we were to carry that legislation beyond the legitimate and necessary point, we should be rendering it still more difficult for our workmen to compete with the foreigner, who is unfettered by that kind of legislation. Philanthropists should remember that if they push this kind of legislation too far, and curtail the hours of labour too much, the workman will end by finding that he has no hours of labour to be curtailed. This question, therefore, must be dealt with reasonably.

*The Development of Co-operation.*

There is now but one more point upon which I need touch. It is that I see some chance and hope of a greater division of profits by the development of the co-operative and profit-sharing system: and that not only in manufactures, but in agriculture. I see in the chair the son of a gentleman of this county of Sussex, who has himself attempted to give that system some development, and I think that, notwithstanding the enormous difficulties in its way, now when land is so extraordinarily cheap, now



when landowners are willing to sell, there never was a better moment for the development of a profit-sharing system among agricultural labourers. To secure this would meet the arguments of those who, on the one side, have little confidence in the productive power of men farming small plots of land—for they would find that by placing a number of labourers together, they would be able to secure the great advantages of combined labour and the use of machinery—and, on the other side, it would satisfy those who desire that the labourer may not pass his days entirely dependent on his weekly wage, and who would find in such co-operation the means of giving him a share of profits which would encourage his hopes. From both points of view, therefore, I say that there is hope in this movement.

Gentlemen, I am profoundly grateful to you for the patience with which you have heard me. I trust I have brought home to you the points upon which I lay importance. Free and self-reliant industry, carried on under satisfactory sanitary conditions, employed on cheap raw material, sustained by cheap food, having a certain command over the luxuries of life at moderate rates, sharing to a certain degree the profits of capital, protected by a mighty navy, pouring its products abroad to ever-expanding markets, attracting the colonies by the soundness of its principles and foreign countries by the honesty of its wares, exhibiting throughout its national common-sense,—such appear to me to be conditions of which we need not despair. Such is an ideal of which I think we need not be ashamed. Under such a system we shall increase “the material resources of the poor” without diminishing the aggregate of national wealth. And within that programme there is ample space for the two great principles of freedom and of duty. Freedom and duty are not unworthy watchwords for a great party and for a great nation. I honour the enthusiasm of ardent philanthropy, I honour the enthusiasm of missionary zeal, I honour the enthusiasm of national glory; but among the many enthusiasms which elevate and purify and beautify our national life, I claim a high and foremost place for the enthusiasm of civic duty and of civic self-restraint. Progress with prudence, liberty with order, independence with loyalty,—such have been the phases which have marked our history from stage to stage; and if from time to time there have been follies and shortcomings, nevertheless I say that, looking to the work which this nation has done, and to

*A Practical  
Ideal.*

the spirit in which it has performed it, we have no cause to bow our heads with shame. We cannot claim the indulgence due to a penitent people which, with regrets, is groping darkly after better things. We cannot claim the indulgence due to a young nationality struggling up through difficulties to a higher plane. On us rests the responsibility of an historic race which has long stood in the van of liberty, Christianity, and civilization. Let us, then, an ancient people, now in the enjoyment of the modern gift of completed freedom, lend for all time a steadfast Saxon sense of national duty to the fine old motto of Norman chivalry, *Noblesse oblige*.

## VIII.

Delivered at the Rosebery Banquet, Edinburgh, on the  
13th November 1885.

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Mr. GOSCHEN said—My Lord Stair, my Lords, Ladies, and Gentlemen,—I think it was a happy thought, on the part of those who organised this Banquet in honour of Lord Rosebery, to include in the list of toasts the one which has been placed in my hands—namely, “The Empire.” That is the toast which I have to *The Empire.* submit; and if it is not one that is conventionally included in what are called the loyal and patriotic toasts, I nevertheless venture to believe that it is always included in the thoughts of loyal and patriotic men. We have been discussing various subjects to-night—the unity of the party, and many points of interest; but while we are engaged in our party conflicts at home, there are beyond the seas millions who are watching us, millions who are interested in decisions at which this country may arrive, millions whose happiness may depend upon the action of future Parliaments, millions who are embraced in that one great word—the “Empire.” I know the interest which our noble guest this evening, Lord Rosebery, takes in this subject; and I am sure that if, in the great pleasure which he must feel to-night at the reception which you have given him, there is one sentiment in his mind which is not entirely of satisfaction, it is regret that it does not fall to his lot to propose this particular toast—“The Empire”—because he is the great Liberal Imperialist. He has made the round of the world, and has secured the sympathies of a vast portion of our dominions—our English-speaking colonies; and I know that one of the chief articles of his political creed is to draw closer the bonds of the Empire by means of courageous sympathy—sympathy with courage and courage with sympathy—courage which may attract the colonies, and sympathy that may win their hearts. The Germans

speak of their Fatherland, but I hope that our colonies will always speak of this country with a word that has at least as deep and tender a meaning—I mean, as their Mother-country. And always may there be those bonds between us and them,—those bonds between the daughters beyond the seas and the mother at home.

My Lords and Gentlemen, what a fascinating and what a tempting topic is this of the Empire! Into what subjects might one not stray, if it were not already ten o'clock or more! Of what might I not speak in connection with the Empire—the deeds of our soldiers, the exploits of our navy, the zeal of our missionaries, the enterprise of our explorers, the vastness of our commerce, the increasing millions of the English-speaking race, the glories of the past, and the possibilities of the future! What is there not in this great word "Empire" on which an inhabitant of these islands might dilate with pride and gratitude? You would not suffer the ignoble suggestion that this topic of the greatness of the Empire was merely a spirit-stirring verse in the poetry of politics, and in the flights of after-dinner rhetoric. I trust there is no one in this room, there is no one in the Liberal party, who does not wish to see the maintenance of the integrity and greatness of the Empire remaining one of the articles—one of the first articles—in the creed of practical politicians, to be classed amongst the foremost subjects in the serious debates of sober statesmen. We have reached a crisis in our history. We know that new forces have come to the front, and that in the future it will rest with the democracy to carry forward that history which they have inherited, and which is now placed in their hands. It is they who will have to see that they carry out the duties of this great Empire to our subject races and to our colonies beyond the seas, and they will remember that there are three great points to be considered—interests, sentiments, and duties. Not British interests only, because how narrow a view is it to say that we have simply to look to British interests! We who govern not only these islands which compose the United Kingdom, but we who are responsible, through the position that we occupy, for the happiness and the prosperity of hundreds of millions—how can we say that we will look upon the great questions of international or foreign policy simply from the point of view of British interests? No, the interests must be Imperial interests; and we should be false to the dusky races in India and elsewhere, to whom we have pledged

*Interests,  
Sentiments,  
and Duties.*

our word that we would govern them according to the best of our ability,—we should be false to our own history and false to duty, if we were not to remember that it is not only in the narrow interests of these islands that we must govern, but that we must look to the interests of every part of the Empire which we have inherited.

And so again as regards sentiment. Can we ignore sentiment in our politics? Can we simply look to material interests? No. I believe that, in proportion as the masses will have a greater voice in the management of our affairs, so questions of sentiment will come more to the front, and it will be seen how great an element in government is the element of sympathy. Sympathy and sentiment cannot be ignored by the governing classes of any country. We have often been called a shopkeeping race; but I believe there is no race which is more open to the force of sympathy than the people of England, of Scotland, and of Ireland. The difficulties caused by sentiment have confronted us in many forms. We have heard much to-night with regard to that fearful Irish problem, and it is sentiment to a great extent which is there confronting us, and it is sentiment—we cannot ignore the fact—which in a certain degree is creating those difficulties, which it requires a united front on the part of the Liberal party to meet. Sentiment confronts us in various parts of the globe, and we must not be blind to the fact. There was a time when we, perhaps, scarcely thought sufficiently of the feelings of our colonial fellow-subjects; but that time is passing away, and we see every year, and I rejoice to see, that there is an increasing feeling that this Empire must look for its strength and for its position amidst the Powers of the Continent, who are closing in upon us in so many directions,—that it must look to the increased support of our English-speaking colonies all over the globe. And not only our English-speaking colonies, but in proposing the toast of the Empire I shall not forget our Indian fellow-subjects, and I think it is right to call your attention to the fact that recently, in a moment of great difficulty, the Indian native princes, feeling confidence in the just rule of the British people, came forward to offer us their aid spontaneously when they thought that our supremacy in India was threatened by a foreign Power. We may be taxed by foreigners, who do not understand our ways, with despotic government; but it is a great tribute to the way in which this country

has managed the affairs of India that, in a crisis like that which we lately passed through, the native princes knew that both their interests, their sentiments, and their gratitude were on the side of the country that was ruling them.

And shall we forget that in a small war—a war that did not tax the resources of this country—there were colonies who thought that they would wish to see colonial forces standing shoulder to shoulder with our own troops? Our colonies knew that there was no lack of power amongst us, but they knew also that it would increase the credit of the country, that it would assist to bind together the various parts of the Empire, if side by side with the brave regiments from Ireland, side by side with the regiments from England, and with the Highlanders who came from Scotland, there should stand sturdy colonial troops, sent forth from the colonies at their own expense, not to relieve us from any great danger, but to show the growing sentiment of solidarity amongst all parts of our great Empire. I am glad to think that as the years roll on, and as more and more the sentiment grows that our foreign policy means, not aggression, but that it means the performance of duty, the maintenance of justice to all races,—that in proportion as that sentiment grows, so there will also grow the feeling that our colonies will stand by the mother-country, and that from all sides they will assist us. If I might use the titles of a great authoress, we shall feel now that our Empire does not rest upon “Pride and Prejudice,” but that it rests upon “Sense and Sensibility.” It is sympathy now, and the common sense to understand our mutual interests, and not the arrogance of a governing race, which are the secret of our Imperial power. And on these lines I trust we may go forward, and that we shall defend our Empire, not in the spirit simply of the point of honour, the susceptible point of honour of the mediæval Spaniard, who was always wishing to fight, nor simply with the spirit of arrogance, the spread-eagleism of the men who advocated the Monroe doctrine; but that we shall know that we may rest our Empire upon the consciousness of our own strength and the strength of those who have gone forth from us to found our colonies, and upon the conviction that we have not simply selfish interests to defend, but that we have sympathies to remember, sentiments to respect, and duties to perform. I beg to couple this toast of “The Empire” with the name of Mr. Blake, of Canada.

## IX.

Delivered in the Calton Ward, Edinburgh, on the  
16th November 1885.

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Mr. GOSCHEN, after some preliminary observations, said—*The Issue at the Coming Election.* The issues at this Election are too large, too serious, and too far-reaching, to make it right for candidates to waste much time in personal matters, in personal attacks, or in personal recriminations. What I want to do is to satisfy the electors, if I can, that I fairly represent the opinions of this constituency. For that purpose I am anxious to explain my views positively and not negatively. It is a poor way to conduct your candidature to speak chiefly of what your opponents are thinking or saying, without fully explaining your own position. I have not been content with simple criticism of the opinions of others, or with launching return blows at adversaries, I have declared what policy I would myself promote and assist to carry out. You know as well as I do what is the great issue before us. It is this—How we can best carry forward in the next Parliament those objects upon which the Liberal party is united—those objects which have been put forward in the programme of him, who is the only recognised leader of the party, Mr. Gladstone. You know the famous four points. I should like to persuade you that they are, one and all, matters of direct personal interest to every elector. To-night I will speak more particularly of Local Government and Land, and endeavour to prove to you how the electors in this Division are interested in them.

Many electors may think that, living in a city which is well governed, and where you have a large and perfect municipal government, you are less interested, or not at all interested, in the great question of Local Government Reform, which stands in the forefront of the programme to which we are pledged. I submit

*All Classes  
interested in  
Local Govern-  
ment Reform,*

to you that the citizens of Edinburgh are deeply interested in this question, and I will tell you why. Not because of a necessity for improved government in this particular place, but because there will be a new distribution of duties. A number of duties, hitherto performed by the Imperial Parliament, will, under any new Local Government Bill, be placed upon localities themselves; and thus large questions in which I know many of the electors in this room take a deep interest—for instance, the Licensing question and the question of Local Option—will be settled by granting to the existing municipalities, and to the new local authorities throughout the country, a much larger share of authority than they have had hitherto. And we have a double object in view—the object of transferring work from Parliament to the municipalities, and thereby lightening the work of Parliament, and making Parliament more efficient for general legislation; and, on the other hand, that of confiding to local authorities greater powers than have existed heretofore, thereby lifting the whole system of Local Government to a higher plane. You will thus be able to secure more rapid Imperial legislation in the direction of those many reforms for which we are all anxious; and, at the same time, even in a city like this, you will have increased opportunities for exercising your civic privileges and performing your civic duties. It is perfectly clear that the local authorities, unreformed as they are—at least in the rural parts of England and Scotland—have not done their duty. They have not been able, through their constitution, to do their duty in regard, for example, to the important question of the Housing of the Poor. The enforcement of sanitary laws has been defective owing to the defective constitution of the local authorities. Now, I would ask any one, to whatever class he may belong, whether the execution of sanitary laws—the rigorous execution of these laws—is not a matter of personal importance to all? Working men are specially interested in it. To them it is not only a question of health, it is a question of wage; because the stronger the working man, the less he is stricken down by sickness; and the more wholesome his dwelling, the more wholesome the surroundings in which his wife and family are living, the more he will be able to perform his duty to his family, and to do thorough work. And so I say these municipal questions are not mere theoretical questions. They come home to every one in the country, and on their wise solution will



depend the health and the proper housing of the people, and many other most important interests which concern the whole of the community. Don't, then, think of local government reform as a matter that we can simply put on one side, saying, "Oh, it is all very well; but we should wish to have legislation more directly affecting this or that class." Local government affects all classes, and I invite the electors to insist on its reform as a matter that must be carried out by the Parliament which is about to be assembled.

And now let me speak on the Land question. Here again I say, *And in Land Reform.* that, though this is a town constituency, you, the electors of Edinburgh, and the electors in all borough constituencies throughout the United Kingdom, are deeply interested in it. In my opinion, all classes connected with the land—the agricultural labourers, the farmers, and the landlords—will find their interests promoted by the freer sale of land, by land becoming a commodity in the market like any other commodity. To all these classes the greater dispersion of land will be a source of increased prosperity. And if that is so, the inhabitants of the towns will not fail to have a large share of the benefits. No line—no arbitrary line—separates town and country, so that you could say, Here are all urban interests, and there are all agricultural interests. The well-being of the whole country hangs together by innumerable ties, and any development of prosperity amongst the agricultural labourers and the farmers, reacts without fail upon the towns.

Then, I ask, have you not this further great inducement to undertake reform in the Land Laws, that, having to support an enormous mass of Imperial and of local taxation, you are all interested, individually and collectively, in each class of the community being able to bear its share? And, looking to the increasing amount of expenditure, is it not personally important to us all that land should be in such a flourishing condition that, both through the income-tax, through the death duties, and through the local taxation which rests in so large a degree upon real property, we should be able to derive that income from land which otherwise would have to be made up by other sources of revenue? Here, again, you see how the prosperity of land is a matter of the highest moment, as assisting other interests to carry the gigantic burden of our national expenditure, which we must be able to bear lightly and fairly, if we are to hold our own at all in the race of

nations. I scarcely think that the question of Expenditure has been sufficiently considered in the hurlyburly of this general election, but it is one which will tax the members of the next Parliament to the utmost. The state of the country is not such that we can look with light hearts to any increasing burdens, and so I venture to put in a claim, as I have done elsewhere, for one of the oldest watchwords of the Liberal, and the Radical, party—for retrenchment and economy.

*Depression of Trade.*

The question of Expenditure is closely connected with that of trade; and inquiries have been sent to me, which I am very glad to answer, with regard to the depression of trade. Three questions have been put to me. The first is this—Do you ignore or do you recognise the depression in trade? Well, I recognise the absence of profits—and a very serious state of things it is—more than some of the politicians who have spoken upon this matter. I think we have arrived at a situation which is sufficiently serious to demand very considerable attention. I am not disposed to undervalue continental competition. I cannot take a rose-coloured view of our immediate industrial future. That is my answer to the first question. I am next asked—but I won't trouble this audience much upon it—Whether I consider that the appreciation of gold has increased the state of depression? I should expect to be interrupted pretty soon if I were to enter upon an elaborate currency argument upon this occasion, but I am prepared to say that I certainly believe that the appreciation of gold has had a material effect upon trade; and that the absence of profits—which is the main feature of the present depression—is largely due to a fall of prices, representing a change in the relation of gold to commodities. The subject is too abstruse for a public meeting, but let me point out that the absence of profits is partly synonymous with cheapness of prices, and that low prices are not without their counterbalancing advantages to a country such as ours. Cheapness of price means cheapness of living, and I should look with the greatest possible doubt on any schemes which tended artificially, directly or indirectly, to raise prices against the consumer. Well, I am further asked what legislation I would propose, or whether I could conceive that some legislation was possible? I think action extremely difficult. I do not think that by legislation you would be able to restore any greater buoyancy to trade. I can fancy, on the other hand, that by legislation you could do incalculable harm. You

might stop or hamper industries, or you might do what would almost be as bad—you might artificially force industries, to be followed afterwards by what has so often happened in similar cases—by the crash of those industries themselves. You cannot solve the problem by such means. There are other ways by which you can better hope to meet the rivalry of foreigners. I have frequently called attention to them. Relieve the country, as far as you can, of any undue pressure of taxation; increase our thriftiness as a people, promote our sobriety as a people, and pay the greatest possible attention to the organization of education, to technical education, and to all possible methods by which the workmen, and the foremen, and the managers of industries can best learn their craft! These are the best methods by which to enable the working-classes to compete with their rivals abroad—these are principles, gentlemen, which have commended themselves from of old, to the old school of Liberals—these are the principles which hitherto, notwithstanding ups and downs, have made us a prosperous nation.

And now permit me to allude to the charges unjustly brought against those who see difficulties in ulterior measures which are proposed, to the effect that they are wanting in enthusiasm; that while others are enthusiastic, they simply criticise, or go backward. On what single question which belongs to the range of practical politics may it be fairly said that I have gone back, or that I belong to the retrograde party? What is at the root of the charge?—a charge which I repudiate in the strongest possible terms. It is this—that, while I admire enthusiasm, and share the enthusiasm as to ends which are to be reached, I am not prepared to acclaim and to praise the first measure which is proposed to promote those ends, if it does not seem to me a practical measure, likely to realize the object at which it is aimed. Is not that the process which you follow in your private affairs? And surely public affairs have to be conducted in the same business-like way as your private affairs. It is not enough simply to say, Here is an object which we desire to reach, and if anyone opposes the particular plan by which we propose to reach that object, or if he criticises it, he must be hostile to the object and wanting in enthusiasm. I claim the right for every member of the party, as I accord the right to every member of the party, to examine the measures by which we are asked to pursue common aims. If I see

*Criticism and  
Enthusiasm.*

*Instances of  
Criticism.*

that a certain object is desired, and that measures are proposed which clearly will not carry out the particular object aimed at, am I furthering that object by saying that I will vote in favour of such measures, if I believe that they will frustrate their purpose? That is not business-like. It is an unfair charge against a man to accuse him of being an enemy to the cause advocated because you can't persuade him to agree to your favourite methods for promoting it. For instance, in education I am as keen an educationist as any member of the Liberal party. I will not trouble you by a repetition of the remarks that I have made on previous occasions with reference to free education, nor with regard to my views on technical education. But this I have said, and this I repeat, that I am most anxious that all those measures should be considered solely from the point of view of how best to promote that educational progress in which the industrial future, the moral future, and the social future of this country are so deeply concerned. Some may think that the remission of fees in primary education is the best step to take; others may think that if you spend the sum which free schools would cost the country upon the improvement of the technical education of the working-classes you would better promote the common object which you have in view. What I claim is this—that in the debate which is proceeding in some parts of Scotland, and in some parts of England also, as to what is Liberal and what is not Liberal, you are not to look simply at the particular measure discussed, but you are to see whether you are united in the common end; and I claim, as regards education, not only not to be a retrograde Liberal, but I claim to be in the very forefront of those who are anxious for the education of the working-classes.

Again, as regards the land, I have repeatedly said, long before the present discussion had arisen, when the question of Allotments and other similar proposals came to the front, that I was in favour of promoting and, by every possible and legitimate means, of increasing, the number of peasant proprietors in all parts of the kingdom. I have often said—I said it ten years ago at least—that it was a danger that the land was held in such few hands, and that an increase in that number would largely promote the prosperity and stability of the country. But does that bind me down to agree to any particular measure devised, if I believe I see that it will not have the desired effect? Would it not be

cowardly, would it not almost be treachery to my own convictions, if I were simply, for the sake of catching votes, to pretend to accept a measure, when I believed it would fail to accomplish the object in view? I am not particularly hurt by this charge that I have examined measures which have been proposed. It is necessary that measures should be examined. Those do a service who strive to ensure it—I do not wish to speak of myself, but I think it is absolutely necessary that the duty should be performed—that every measure, every new measure, should be thoroughly thrashed out, as several measures have lately been thrashed out, before the constituencies of the kingdom. It is work that can be done with good temper and with all the courtesy of controversy, and without recourse to such epithets as “retrograde,” or “sceptical,” or “indifferent.” Let me give you another illustration in connection with land. There is the famous case of the three F’s—fair rent, free sale, and fixity of tenure. If the three F’s were enacted in a Bill, they would strike a blow at peasant proprietorship, which would render that system almost impossible of execution. You may have either peasant proprietorship, or you may have the system of double ownership; for the three F’s mean the most complicated system of double ownership—a system of double ownership which I conceive to be totally inapplicable to the United Kingdom, whatever may be its effect in Ireland. But you cannot have both.

I have sought to illustrate the unfairness of the charge brought against some Liberals that they are too critical. If they were simply critical, without sympathy with the object to be arrived at, a legitimate charge would lie against them. But I claim, and I will claim before any audience of my countrymen, that I have as much enthusiasm, with regard to aims, as any of those who have criticised me. If I have the good fortune, as I hope to have, to represent the Eastern Division,—I am sure, though there may be many faults which people may find with me, that there is one fault which they will not find with me—that is, that I am deficient in enthusiasm. I agree with those who say that if there was not some enthusiasm, if there were not high aims and great causes in which we could embark, then the infinite pettiness and complications of party struggles would before long disgust all the best politicians. We must look to our aims, the greatness of our aims, in order to reconcile us to political life. While these aims are

*Recognition of  
Enthusiasm.*

great, political life is pleasant. If these aims were small, believe me, it would be no great privilege to sit in the Imperial Parliament. There are other countries where men do not find Parliament so satisfactory in dealing with large questions as to reconcile them to the sacrifices and the struggles that attend Parliamentary life. In the United States, it is said, many men stand aside and aloof from political life. They do not find in it the large issues and high aims which might attract them. May that never be the case in this country! May our political life always be such, as not only to attract the heads and hearts of men, but may that life be such that we may struggle, each according to his conscience, each according to the best of his abilities, to promote measures which shall improve the condition—social, moral, and material—of all classes of the community. I do not envy those politicians—I do not know that there are many of them—who would simply narrow their views to certain material objects, to be dangled before various classes. It appears to me that the one thing needful to remember at this crisis of our history is that to which I have referred to on many other occasions, and I have referred to it before to-night—that you cannot influence the well-being of one class without influencing also the well-being of other classes. All classes hang together. Their interests are so interwoven, that if you legislate for the real benefit of anyone, you will find that you are legislating for the improvement of all. This brings me back to the point from which I started—the common, the joint interest of all classes in the work which we are about to undertake. We have to improve local government. Why? In order to see sanitary legislation more efficiently carried out; in order to see the housing of the poor attended to; in order to see landlords kept up to the mark of doing their duty as regards the houses which they let; in order to keep all classes up to the performance of their civic duties. We have to prevent foolish fiscal legislation. Why? Because any legislation striking at industry, any experimental legislation dealing with tariffs, any measure in the direction of Protection—all these would strike a blow at the well-being of all classes in the community. We have to stimulate education. Why? Because it will benefit all classes of the community. That is the spirit in which I approach these questions, looking to the community as a whole.

*All Interests  
interwoven.*

I should like to touch on one point more, the system of ex-

acting a great many pledges and promises from members when they propose themselves to constituencies. Now, I know something of the difficulties which ensue. People often seem to fancy that members of Parliament must have a set of cut and dried opinions which they can produce at a moment's notice, not only on the topics of the day, but upon every possible question that can be by any ingenuity imagined. But most of us have not had time to examine every possible question that can possibly arise under any contingency, and this is how things go: A candidate is asked to pledge himself, we will say, to a particular resolution, and he is weak enough to comply. Well, what happens in the House of Commons? A resolution is proposed; there is a debate upon it, and, to the confusion of a great many people, a member gets up and says, "I wish the hon. member who has proposed this resolution would allow it to be amended by adopting the following words." Then there is a confused scene, some begging the hon. member not to accept the amendment, and others not to refuse it. Well, our weak candidate has pledged himself to the resolution. Is it the resolution in its original form; or is it the resolution amended and changed by the words which have been introduced? Members round him say, "What are you going to do?" and he says, "I am pledged—let me see—what am I pledged to? I am not pledged to this particular resolution. I do not know to what I am pledged." I have seen these things repeatedly. For instance, after a resolution is proposed, someone says, "It is too vague—put in the word 'forthwith,' and then I will vote for it;" and the mover of the resolution says, "I will put in 'forthwith.'" Then you say, "But I don't mean that. I have not promised my constituents to engage in legislation *forthwith* upon this subject;" and so the unfortunate candidate finds himself in this position, that he does not know to what he is pledged, and the greatest misunderstandings arise between him and his constituents. Now I say this—and I will say it even if it cost me my seat in Parliament—(cheers and hisses.) Yes, people like to get these pledges; but, look to it, that the pledges are possible. There are pledges on impossibilities; there are pledges on generalities. They are illusory. I tell you distinctly they are illusory; and the more honest way is to say what is your opinion at the present moment; but, I feel, as for pledges, that is a different affair. In your private lives, pledges would not commend themselves to you. You would not

*The Mania  
for Pledges.*

pledge yourselves to generalities—you would not give any general pledge of what you would or would not do. You would want to know positively, that that which you promised, you could perform, and you would want to look not only to the letter, but to the spirit in which the promise was given. A constituency is fully entitled to hear the views of candidates; but as to pledges, I say, in conclusion, that I will not hold out hopes, during the heated time of an electoral contest which I know will not be realised afterwards when I am in my place in the House of Commons. There is nothing easier than to say “yes” in an off-hand manner to the first question that is put to you; but to carry out your “yes” in Parliament, when you get there, may be a matter of very considerable difficulty. When the day comes for you to vote for the candidates at the poll, if you shall say “yes” to my election then I will undertake that I shall be able to say “yes” afterwards with respect to every pledge I have given, both in the letter and in the spirit.



## X.

Delivered in the St. Leonard's Ward, Edinburgh, on the  
17th November 1885.

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Mr. GOSCHEN said—To-morrow that Parliament will end which was elected in 1880—elected with great hopes of what it might be able to achieve—a Parliament which, I believe, notwithstanding many of its shortcomings, has done very considerable things. But that Parliament during its later years was unable to perform its duty on account of an organized system of obstruction—a system so organized that it was impossible for the united Liberal party to overcome it. Well, gentlemen, this Parliament has come to an end, and within a week from the present time it will be the duty of the electors throughout the boroughs of England, Scotland, and Ireland, to elect representatives, and to constitute a new Parliament; and I believe that it will be the fervent hope of every man, to whatever party he belongs, that the new Parliament which will be elected should be strong enough, should be brave enough, should be persistent enough, and durable enough, to perform all those duties which the country expects of it. Within a week this contest will be over, and it appears to me that as the contest grows warmer, more weapons are employed of a questionable character, and which were not used at the earlier stages of the fight. Those who heard our great chief, Mr. Gladstone, last week, heard him read a list of the various charges, the malevolent and malicious charges, which had been brought against him. Those who read the papers this morning will have seen that Mr. Chamberlain had also a list to read of very atrocious calumnies against his personal honour, and against his personal character, in which his adversaries had indulged. Some of the electors in this constituency have been much in the same position as the electors of Birmingham. They, too, have

*Personalities  
of this  
Election.*

*False State-  
ments as to  
Religious  
Belief.*

been treated to slanders with regard to their candidates. I stated last night that I did not wish to mix up any personal questions or personal recriminations in this contest. I think it far more important to tell the electors what my views are upon the questions of the day. But some things cannot be passed over entirely in silence. There is an instance, I won't say of a slander, but of a gross falsehood, that has been put out by the canvassers of my opponent. They have been stating, I am informed to-day, not only that I am a Jew by descent and birth—for which there is not the slightest possible foundation, because my family for centuries have been Protestants—but that I am at this moment holding the Jewish faith and attending the Jewish synagogue. It would have been nothing to say that I was a Jew, because in these days, if I were a Jew, there is no reason why I should not come forward plainly and say so. I don't think any man ought to be ashamed of the religion to which he belongs; and I have never known a Jew who was ashamed of the race to which he belonged, or who prevaricated with regard to his religion. It would have been nothing to say that I was a Jew, but to assert that I am a professing Jew at this moment, is a wicked insinuation for this reason, that, if it were true, it would have been most disgraceful in me to have come forward and spoken of the Established Church of England, as the Church I myself belong to, and to have used other expressions conveying my attachment to the English Established Church. I am almost ashamed to allude to such personal matters, but I mention them to place electors on their guard. From the first moment when I put my foot on a platform in Edinburgh, I have said I wished the struggle to be simply political. But if slanders are whispered into the ears of the electors, and if at the doors of meetings pamphlets, containing every possible falsehood, are put into the hands of electors, candidates are almost forced to reply. Gross pamphlets have been circulated among you with regard to my connection with Egyptian affairs, full of garbled extracts, false statements, and incorrect figures. This rubbish gives an entirely false colour to everything that I have done in connection with Egypt from the beginning to the end. I should be sorry not only that men who are the electors of this Division, but that any man should believe the stuff that has been written of me.

In the first instance, it has been put forward that I went to Egypt

in the interests of German Jews and speculators. That is absolutely false. I did not go to Egypt in the interests of capitalists. I will tell you in whose interests I went. Those who know anything of this matter know that I went to Egypt without any personal interest whatever. I went to Egypt in an unpaid capacity, at great personal inconvenience to myself. There were thousands of people who had bought Egyptian securities in the open market. There were half-pay officers, retired civil servants, tradesmen of every kind, widows, thousands of people who had invested small savings in Egyptian bonds, holding millions of this stock. It was felt that the utter breakdown in the value of these bonds would mean ruin and impoverishment to thousands of families. Many were the letters which reached me as to the misery which would be caused, and I went to Egypt in the interests of a great body of people—not of great capitalists or speculators. Speculators are very well able to take care of themselves.

*False Statements as to Mission to Egypt.*

And now let me tell you the conditions on which I went to Egypt. This was the first condition—that “it must be understood that if I undertake to represent the interests of the bondholders, I should do so simply with a view of securing, if possible, their more equitable treatment, and advising with regard to the propriety and expediency of accepting or rejecting proposals that may be made by others, but that I should not, under any circumstance whatever, be involved myself in any financial transaction or combination. Secondly, if any financial combination favourable to English bondholders should be proposed by English capitalists in whom the bondholders would have confidence, I should wish to be able at once to consider my functions at an end. Further, that my position should be entirely honorary—that is to say, that I should not receive a single farthing for any services I might render. Not only that, but I should also expect that in any negotiation which might be carried on, of which I was cognizant, no paid agents of any kind should be employed. To speak quite plainly on this subject,” I went on to say in my letter at that time, “what I mean is this, that no money should be made by anybody out of the protection of the interests of British bondholders.” These were the conditions—that was the letter I wrote at the time I undertook my mission. And here is the last stipulation to which I shall call your attention. “I can under-

*Conditions of that Mission.*

take," I said, "no duties that would interfere in any way with my perfect freedom of political action. I could not urge any steps on the English Government, which, though useful to the bondholders, I might deem politically inexpedient. I am bound to say that this may fairly be considered by bondholders as a reason for preferring their interests to be placed in other hands." I reserved by this stipulation my entire political freedom. I said I would not in the least degree do anything that would jeopardise my perfect freedom of political action. And I should like to know why any one should have thought that I would sacrifice my political position, which I venture to say was one of which I had no reason to be ashamed—why any one should have thought that, in a case such as this, I should be prepared for one moment to sacrifice my duties as a politician and statesman. I have seen a scurrilous pamphlet which states—what is a notorious and stupendous falsehood—that I did not join the late Cabinet on account of Egypt. Whoever wrote that, unless he never read a newspaper in his life, must have known it to be false. You know the reason why I was not in the late Cabinet? (A voice, "The franchise.") Yes, the franchise. It was not Egypt. I am almost ashamed to allude to such a calumny as that it was on account of Egypt that I was excluded from the Cabinet, but you know—it is an open secret, though I am sorry really to allude to it—I have been offered since then some of the highest offices of the State.

I have given you a specimen of the truth of the allegations in this pamphlet. There is another statement, which is more of a technical nature, and I confess that to enter upon these matters at a meeting like this, is somewhat difficult; but it has been said that the arrangement which I made involved this country afterwards in the complications which followed. It is not the fact that the arrangement made in 1876 involved the Government of this country officially. The arrangement of 1876 was what you may call a private arrangement in bankruptcy. An elector cried out some time ago, "What about the Egyptian taxpayer?" Well, I am glad to say that in the arrangement made by me, securities were taken to prevent the fearful abuses that had existed before with regard to taking taxes twice over from the Egyptian taxpayer. I laboured as a private individual to my utmost in order to secure efficient administration in Egypt, but

*The Arrangement of 1876.*

it was beyond the task of private individuals, and therefore the scheme broke down, but it did not involve the British Government. Our Government became involved by the Control, as it is called, established by Lord Salisbury in 1879. It was in 1879 that the British Government established an official Dual Control.

But it is said "Mr. Gladstone protested against the interference of Britain in Egypt in 1876. Mr. Goschen went to Egypt in 1876, and therefore Mr. Gladstone must have protested against his action;" but the curious point is this, and it shows the logic of pamphlets of this kind, that Mr. Gladstone made his protest *before* I went to Egypt, and his protest was directed against the official action which had been taken by the Conservative Government in sending in 1875 Mr. Cave to Egypt, in buying in 1876 the Suez Canal shares, and in sending Sir Rivers Wilson to the Khedive to advise him on finance. These were the points against which Mr. Gladstone protested, and he has over and over again, in the House of Commons, drawn a distinction between the private arrangement of 1876, which did not involve the interference of British Government, and that Dual Control which was established by Lord Salisbury in 1879, and which did involve such interference.

If you are not exhausted, I would wish to say one word further upon that point. Lord Salisbury did interfere in Egyptian finance in 1879, but I venture to believe that both then and in 1875 and 1876, the intervention of the British Government was not, and you will be glad to think it was not—though it is a Conservative Government of which I am speaking—was not on behalf of the bondholders. It was to secure that degree of order in Egypt which would secure the route to India. ("Oh, oh.") Well, I am not speaking of myself; I am speaking of a Conservative Government at this moment. Bankruptcy in Egypt meant chaos, chaos meant foreign intervention, and foreign intervention meant the loss to us of the control of the Canal and the route to India. You may doubt this, but that is my view, and that has been the view of successive Governments. (A voice, "It was the loss of interest.") No, it was not the loss of interest. That is an entire error. Of the interest much has been lost; the interest has been cut down; but the object of successive Governments has been to prevent that chaos in Egypt which would mean the intervention of the foreigner.

And why? Many people who talk very glibly about Egypt, forget that almost every great European Power has Judges in Egypt, who together form an International Court. A Code with an international sanction regulates the relations between foreigners and the Egyptian Government; and under that code, every bondholder, whether foreign or British, is able to sue the Egyptian Government in that International Court and to get judgment. And judgment means this—that the foreign Government has a right to see it enforced. The British Government does not, as is sometimes supposed, intervene on behalf of such pecuniary interests; but foreign Governments do, and the German Government did interfere when Egyptian bills held by German creditors were left unpaid. The deposition of Ismail Pasha was due mainly to the intervention of the German and Austrian Governments; and we found ourselves in this position in Egypt, that almost every European Power possessed, by treaty right, a *locus standi*, and in that way was able to protect the interests of the creditors belonging to their particular States. Thus, any settlement, which averted bankruptcy under an amicable arrangement, prevented that financial chaos which would have given every foreign Government the right to interfere in Egypt. We might have said that there ought to be no interference in Egypt; but the misfortune is this, that if we had not interfered, other countries who have not got the same sympathies—who, I frankly say, are not animated by the same motives, would have interfered, and so, in the interest of all, to avert bankruptcy was a public service. Intervention was not only in the interest of the creditors of Egypt, but in the interest of European peace. That view has been at the bottom of much of the policy which has taken us to Egypt. And now I have given you the true explanation of the position in which the late Government found themselves in Egypt.

*Our Future  
Policy in  
Egypt.*

With regard to the future of Egypt, the misfortune is that we are, through international treaties, so linked with other Powers that we have got little freedom of action of our own. I have often been taken to task for having opposed, on some occasions, Mr. Gladstone's Government in its action with regard to Egypt; but I have been as often taken to task by Conservatives, for the aid that I have rendered that Government in debates upon this subject, as I have been by Liberals for the criticisms I have made. I have been entirely in accord with Her Majesty's late

Government in this, that having once declared they had gone to Egypt without any regard to exclusively British interests, and having intended to come out of it with clean hands, they could never have accepted a protectorate over Egypt, or sought for any special advantages for this country. That is one of the cardinal points of Mr. Gladstone's policy, and upon that I have been entirely with him. Where I have differed from the late Government has been in this, that they have, in my humble judgment, not looked facts in the face sufficiently early; that they have sometimes been blind to the dangers surrounding them; that they have allowed themselves to be carried away too much by public opinion, and then have vacillated at important moments. But I have not been more critical than some of the most advanced of the supporters of Her Majesty's Government. And I say to this audience, what I will say to any audience of electors or non-electors, that I do not propose to enter Parliament like the First Lord of the Admiralty in the comic opera—"Her Majesty's Ship Pinafore"—who "always voted at his party's call, and never thought of thinking for himself at all." I claim some right of independent judgment for myself.

Let me now turn to some domestic subjects on which I have not yet spoken in detail. I am anxious to speak upon a subject in which I have taken the deepest possible interest for the last twenty years—the housing of the working-classes. I see views are put forward, as if now for the first time, that it is a desirable object, and the duty of the community, to see how the working-classes should be housed. That is a point on which I may say I am thoroughly informed, because twenty years ago I took part in the first movement made in this respect in the metropolis, by joining a body of men who first experimentalised to see how far blocks suitable for working-class dwellings could be built at moderate rates, within the means of working men. Under the system then inaugurated, tens and twenties of thousands have been housed, and a great mass of bad dwellings have been pulled down. And, now, what are the prospects that can be held out to the working-classes of legislative action in this matter? Most of those who are present in this room are aware that a Commission has been sitting upon the housing of the poor, and for the last two years I have been at work on that Commission along with very able colleagues. There is a school of men who believe that

*Dwellings of  
Labourers in  
Towns.*

by forcing this matter on, and by putting it in the hands of municipal bodies and corporations, you will be able to do a great work on behalf of the working-classes which otherwise could not be done. This is the point on which I would wish to engage your attention. It has been thrashed out at the Royal Commission, and instead of holding out impossible or Utopian ideas, let us examine the subject together as practical men. Supposing you gave a corporation power to build houses, and to take compulsory powers to erect large blocks of buildings, the first question which arises is this, Are the new dwellings, which are built with municipal money, to be let at competitive rents, or at low rents? (A voice, "For nothing," and laughter.) I accept that as a humorous interruption, but not as an argument which will commend itself to the working men of Edinburgh. They will not be let for nothing, but there will be a certain body of men who will say, "Let them be let, not at competitive rents, but at lower rents." Then the question is, Who are to be the recipients of this privilege of being housed cheaper than their neighbours who have to seek houses amongst buildings built by ordinary builders? How are you to find out? How is this to be settled? Is it to be settled by the amount of wages of the working man? If that is so, is there to be a committee of the Corporation, or of the local authority, to sit upon the list of various applicants for cheaper lodgings than the market can afford, and to decide according to the means of working men, whether they are to receive the privilege of entering these cheaper lodgings? If so, you place the independence of the working man at the discretion of local authorities and of municipalities. You give an inquisitorial power which, I believe, the working-classes would resent, to determine who is so poor as to be entitled to that particular class of lodgings. Well, then, think of the gigantic prospects of possible jobbery, think of the temptations to which common council men, or members of local authorities, who, after all, are but human, would be exposed, if they were in this position, that being themselves the representatives of the inhabitants of houses, they were to choose from amongst a large number of applicants, those who were to be accommodated at rents below the market price. I believe that if these plans were submitted to the working-classes themselves, they would say, that such a system of what you may call charitable or eleemosynary rents would not be

*Objections to  
providing  
them at  
Public  
Expense.*



one which would fit in with the self-reliant habits of the British people.

But you may say, "At all events let them try at competitive rents, and we shall have an increased supply of houses." Let us test that. Will not builders be frightened at the prospect of municipalities coming in with their large funds at any moment, and erecting great blocks of buildings for the working-classes? Will they not fear that the competition of public money against them might bring them down to the point of being unable to make any profit? And if so, would they not draw in their horns? Thus the working out of the system might be that you would diminish the supply of buildings, at the very moment that you wished to promote it, by giving these powers to the municipalities. You may agree, or you may disagree with me, upon this point, but I think you will admit the force of these observations, and that there are arguments at least on both sides, and that it is necessary carefully to look into these matters, so that you may not find yourselves landed in this position, that after you have made an enormous outlay weighing heavily upon the taxpayers, you would not have promoted the great object which you have in view.

I admit, on the other hand, that everything must be done to facilitate the erection of buildings—of improved buildings—for the working-classes—that can be done. (A voice, "Co-operation.") Co-operation, certainly, so far as it possibly can be utilised; and I thank the elector for that word, because I would infinitely sooner see this matter taken up by co-operative building societies. I would greatly prefer that buildings should be erected by societies with shareholders who are working men, and that, by this means, working men should acquire, as it were, the freehold of the tenements in which they live. During the last few months I have been engaged in investigations with regard to dwellings in the East End, and one of the first things you have to do—perhaps my observations refer more to some of the towns in the south, but the principles are the same as regards Scotland—one of the first points to look to is, How can you get sites? How can you obtain areas on which to build at reasonable prices? Well, on that matter, wherever there is property which has been badly kept, property which the landlords or the middlemen, or both,—whoever are responsible for it,—have allowed to be kept in a disgraceful state, landlords ought certainly not to receive compensation in proportion to the profit which they

make by keeping their houses in that state, but only in proportion to the profit they might get from them, if kept in a state fit for human habitation. I look, as I have stated at various meetings, in the main to the action of the municipalities and the State in laying hold of individuals, and compelling them to do their duty, and punishing them if they don't do their duty. I attach much more importance to that process than to the direct interposition of the State stepping in and relieving them of the duties they are bound to perform.

*Dwellings of  
Labourers in  
the Country.*

I wonder if I should fatigue you if I were to say a word or two about the housing of the agricultural classes on similar lines. Those who are acquainted with this matter know perfectly well that there are very few cottages that pay. The owners of estates are bound, and have carried out their obligation to a considerable extent, to provide cottages. But if these cottages had to pay rent to remunerate the builders, extremely few cottages would be built. I hope you will clearly see the aim I have in view. I don't denounce the object—indeed, I sympathise thoroughly with the object; but if the community steps in and says, "We will build these cottages," then, I ask, are they going to let them at rents below the rates at which they can be built, putting the difference on the community, or will they charge competition rates? If they do so, would it not be probable, would it not be human nature, that the landlords would say, "Well, this has been a very expensive business, and we don't see why the community should not take it off our hands, so that we may no longer have to lose money on cottages as we have hitherto done?" That would be a most natural proceeding on their part. Now, here is another difficulty. Some reformers propose to compel the landowners to build cottages upon their estates in proportion to the number of labourers whom they employ. ("Quite right.") Quite right in principle, but let us see how it will act in practice. I agree in the view as to the duty of landlords; and I believe in many parts of the country—I hope in most—under the stimulus of public opinion, which has become alive to the necessity, landlords are now multiplying their cottages, and are providing good cottages. I see the point of the cry, "Quite right." You say, Compel them to do it; but how is the plan to work out, proceeding on the principle that every estate must have cottages in proportion to the labourers employed? What would a poor landlord do? And there are poor landlords, and there

will be more poor landlords. I don't think there are many landlords who are very flush of money now, and many of them, after they have paid all the charges on their estates, have got a minimum margin to live upon. Be that as it may, we must admit there are poor landlords, and we will suppose them to be compelled to build cottages in proportion to the number of people on their estates. What will they do? They will take their labour list and say, "What is the minimum number of labourers we can do with on this estate? We are not going lightly or carelessly to increase the number of labourers whom we employ." Such a system might in countless instances lead to a reduction in the number of men employed. Again, while insisting on improved houses, you might diminish the number of houses which would otherwise be spontaneously built.

Now, whether you agree with me or not in the deductions I have drawn, you cannot contend, no one can contend, that the one way of looking at these plans is an advanced view, and that the other is a retrograde view; that the one is a generous view, and the other a cold-blooded view. You acknowledge, you must acknowledge, all these difficulties; and, therefore, in spite of any remonstrances that may be made, when I see proposals that seem to me to have a nugatory result, I shall still think it my duty to criticise them, and to point out that they are not practical and will probably break down. One more illustration. There are two great advantages desired for the agricultural labourers—one that they should live near their work, and the other—(A voice, "Better pay.") I would like to deal with that presently. You would wish them to live near their work, and to have security against not being turned out of their cottages. It is said, Give every labourer fixity in his cottage. But the inhabitant of a cottage may take to some other work, and his successor—the labourer who has come to work in his place—cannot get the cottage, because you have given his brother-labourer fixity of tenure, and thus you are obliged to impose the difficulty on the one labourer of living two or three miles from his work, because you have given the other fixity of tenure. You see how full of difficulty these matters are when you begin to introduce law and regulation into them. But, having said this much, let me again repeat that I rejoice to see that public opinion is bringing forward the question of the better housing of the poor, and that

*Proposed  
Fixity of  
Tenure in  
Cottages.*

I rejoice to see that throughout the kingdom a movement is at work—spontaneous, but stimulated by public opinion—to afford better accommodation for the working-classes.

*Compulsory  
Insurance.*

May I allude to one more of these social questions? I was asked yesterday whether I am in favour of Compulsory Insurance for the working-classes—a system of insurance with regard to which, for philanthropic motives, a Committee of the House of Commons was appointed, and which contemplates that workmen should receive in their declining years a certain pension as a protection against poverty, on better terms and better conditions than under the poor law. Who cannot sympathise with such an object? But, on the other hand, are not the friendly societies doing this work to a great extent in a manner which is more satisfactory to the working-classes themselves? (A voice, “Some.”) Yes, I am perfectly prepared to say that the greatest care ought to be taken that every one of those friendly societies should be on a sound basis, for I can fancy no more fearful blow than that, after a working man had contributed from his savings, there should be a wreck of those savings through the failure of a Society. It would discourage thrift, and cruelly disappoint men at the very moment when they hope to enjoy the fruits of their economy and self-denial. I speak under a great sense of responsibility, but I say nevertheless that I prefer the voluntary system of providing against the various calamities of life, rather than State and compulsory provision. What does it mean if the State interferes? It means an order to every working man: “Take a certain amount off your wages; do not lay it by in the manner that you may choose yourself; you must pay it as a premium of insurance to the State fund, at the time and in the manner that the State prescribes.” I claim, on behalf of the working-classes, that they may lay by their savings according to their own judgment, and as seems most right in their own eyes. Where would be the building societies, where would be the co-operative movement, if we were to enact universal compulsory insurance? Again, I plead for the defence of voluntary movements against the undermining process of State interposition.

I think I heard a cry a little time ago that the wages of the agricultural classes ought to be raised. I believe their wages have been raised to a great extent. Certainly, in most parts of the country, I rejoice to say that if we look back over a period of years, we shall find a marked and undeniable advance. And what

is more, each shilling earned goes much further on account of cheaper food, cheaper bread, cheaper tea and sugar, cheaper clothing, than it used to go. And when I am asked, How can you increase the material resources of the poor? I answer, let us at all events make sure, by wholesome and judicious and wise economic policy, that we do not strike at the roots of industry, and make dearer many of the commodities of life, while at the same time we inflict other injuries on the people. It is not by direct means that much can be done by the State or by society to raise wages, but what can be done is, as I have said elsewhere, to establish Industry in the very best conditions. Remember that we are not in the main an agricultural, we are an industrial nation; and that our trade with the colonies, our trade with India, our trade with foreign countries, are all matters of supreme importance. To any audience, where working men are present, I am prepared to repeat, with unflagging persistence, that on them, as much as on any section of the community, devolves the duty of looking to it that our Empire shall be held together. I do not appeal to the vain-glorious sentiment which boasts of dominions on which the sun never sets. But I plead for a close union with the Colonies, and for such government of our fellow-subjects in India as will bind together the different portions of the Empire; that we may be able to keep our position among the peoples of the world, to find markets still open for the industries of our great centres, and to promote the well-being, not only of these islands, but of the millions beyond the seas whose lot has been cast with ours.

*The Best  
Conditions  
for British  
Industry.*

## XI.

Delivered in the Broughton Ward, Edinburgh, on the 23d  
November 1885.

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*Proper Atti-  
tude towards  
Working-  
Classes.*

Mr. GOSCHEN, after some preliminary observations, said—The present Election has been distinguished by the unusual peculiarity, that the main points with which the next Parliament will have to deal are not only agreed to by the mass of the Liberal party, but that they are in principle accepted by our opponents, though we have no confidence in the way in which the Conservatives would carry them out. But this agreement has not narrowed down the questions to be discussed in this election. Social subjects have afforded ample material for prolonged discussion and important controversy. I have endeavoured to deal with a number of these topics. They are questions which interest me deeply, and I have endeavoured to think out carefully the various problems which they involve. In many of my addresses, I have spoken at length upon subjects which may be said mainly to interest the working-classes ; but those who have heard me will know by this time that I have always sought to convey my opinion that what is the interest of one class is also the interest of other classes. I can fancy that the independent working-classes of this country, when they are in a good-natured mood, would smile, and when they are in a cynical mood might almost scoff, at the extraordinary interest which candidates at the time of elections seem to concentrate upon them. I think that the working-classes are far too independent and far too intelligent to value at more than its worth any spasmodic interest shown upon particular occasions. What they will watch to see is whether, in the general course of legislation, and in ordinary times, legislators give heed to the questions which particularly interest them, and follow them with intelligence as well as make promises about them. I have been greatly interested by being

brought into contact with large bodies of working men, and having been able to hear their views and exchange opinions with them on social and industrial topics. But I am sure that there is no class who would wish that legislation should simply be occupied with themselves. The working-classes know that it is not sufficient that those questions should be attacked and grappled with which concern themselves, but that all questions which concern the nation at large must be equally taken in hand. And so, with your permission, I should wish to say a word or two this evening upon two matters which interest the whole nation, all classes—I won't say alike—but all classes in a great degree, and that is National Expenditure and National Taxation.

Our opponents have alleged that most of the Liberal candidates have occupied themselves mainly with questions of legislation. They charge us with having neglected two great topics which in former times always occupied the minds of Liberals to a very great extent—namely, National Economy and the Efficiency of our Administration. And surely, gentlemen, I need not remind you that it is not enough for us to pass laws in Parliament. At an election time, perhaps, the mind is mainly concentrated upon laws. But besides legislating, we have much other work to do. In the first place, what is quite as important as to have good laws is to see that you have good administration for carrying out those laws, and that you do not simply write them upon the statute book, and then let them stand there as so-called legislative successes, exercising afterwards very little influence upon the well-being of the people. No! efficient administration is as important as efficient legislation. But we have not only got to deal with legislation and the administration of the laws. We have been, and I trust we shall always be, the guardians of the public purse,—guardians willing even to incur some unpopularity rather than be ruthless spendthrifts of the national resources placed in our hands. Sometimes in private life you hear of a man who is said to spend his money like a gentleman, and afterwards you find that he is a man who is deep in debt, and whose generosity has not been exercised at his own expense, but at the expense of his creditors. So there may be public administrators of whom it may be said, “There is no niggardly economy there—they spend their money like gentlemen.” But why don't they remember at every point that the money they spend is coming from the taxes of the people? Now-a-days the parts have somewhat changed; and while

formerly the Liberal party used to be charged—and very seriously charged—both by their Conservative opponents and by public opinion, with being too stingy, as it was called, it is now said that they have been too extravagant, and highly-coloured pictures are put before the electors, sometimes even with mechanical appliances, with coloured barometers of expenditure, showing how, during the last five years, the Liberals have spent much more money than the Conservatives had done in the corresponding years before. I have in another place—in a very grave place—made a speech upon the use and abuse of statistics. I do not think that you will object if I say a word or two upon statistics in connection with this charge, brought against us by Conservatives, that we have been so extravagant with the public money. It is said we have brought up taxation to one hundred millions. Now, when I see the Conservative criticisms upon our expenditure, I always perceive that they confine themselves, with great ability and judgment, to totals, and that they do not inform the country or the electors in what respects we have spent too much. Apart from the question of foreign policy, where the issue may be how far the expenditure of the Liberal Government was due to liabilities left them in foreign affairs by their predecessors,—but leaving out these controversial topics, on what do they say that we have spent too much money? I have not seen that this has ever been brought home. I see that totals are charged against us, but I do not see much more. Now, here is a point that will strike every one—that is, that, as our population increases, so does much of the work of the State increase also. For instance, if the Post-Office does more work, the expenditure of the Post-Office will be larger. If the number of children increases—and in most parts of the United Kingdom the number of children increases very rapidly—the cost of their education increases also. This always tells against the last occupants of the Treasury Bench: the Conservatives have the advantage that they make up *their* bill for a period five years ago, while they make up *our* bill for the last five years, and therefore, if there is progressive automatic expenditure—an expenditure which regulates itself—it is clear that in the last five years the expenditure must be greater than in the previous five years, without any change of principle, without any neglect, and without any extravagance.

I hope I make myself plain. Suppose that the State pays so much for every child, then in the last five years, when there were

*Fallacious  
Totals.*



so many more children at school than there were in the preceding five years, the expenditure of the State could not but be larger under that head than in the previous five years with fewer children. But ignoring that fact as too trivial—though it is not trivial—the Conservatives add up their totals to show that they have spent so much less than we have spent from 1880 to 1885. Or look again at the case of the Post-Office, for that is a typical instance. In the Post-Office the figures of 1874 were £2,700,000, and in 1884 £4,500,000, and this increase, due to more letters being sent, due to more telegrams being sent, due to the development of the telegraph system, and which is amply compensated for on the other side of the account by increased receipts, is included by the Conservatives to show how reckless the Liberals have been in the administration of the public funds. You may go through a large number of other departments, and you will find that the great reason for the increase of expenditure, apart from any warlike operations, has been a progress in that expenditure which could not be avoided, but which comes under fixed laws that are common both for the Conservatives and for the Liberals.

*Automatic  
Increase of  
Expenditure.*

Here is another point. A further reason why the expenditure in the last five years was greater than in the preceding five, is because the Conservative Government increased the system of contributions in aid of local government and local expenditure; that is to say, that, while formerly fewer grants were made by the State in aid of local taxation, now, these sums, through the action taken, not by the late Administration, but by the Conservative Administration before them, are very much larger than they used to be; and, having saddled these extra grants upon the Liberal Administration which succeeded them, they now point to the totals and say, "See what extravagant fellows the Liberals are; they have greatly increased the expenditure." It is well worth while to point to instances of this kind, so that electors may not be misled by the mere totals, shown on these coloured diagrams.

*Effect of  
"Grants  
in Aid."*

I saw the other day a statement made by a very distinguished naval officer who has only lately come into office, to the effect that since the Conservative Government have been in power they have laid down fifteen new men-of-war. Well, what will happen? If, as I think there is every probability, the Liberals have a majority at the coming elections, the Liberal Government will have to pay for these fifteen ships which have been commenced by the Conser-

*Misleading  
Tests of  
Expenditure.*

vatives. (A voice, "They are needed.") Whether they are needed, is not the question I am at the moment dealing with. If they are needed, why don't the Conservatives boldly say, "If we remain in power, we shall have to increase our navy estimates by so much money?" What I wish to illustrate is the inconsistency of claiming credit for laying down fifteen ships, and at the same time pointing out the great extravagance of the expenditure which they render necessary. I think it is highly probable that the new ships ought to be commenced, but I object that the Conservative Government should have made a beginning, or pretended to make a beginning, with the ships, when they have not got the money to spend upon them. They will make drawings, and have everything ready, and then, when the Liberals come into office, the Liberals will begin to pay the bill. Some years hence, when there is another general election, it will be said, in the first place, by the Conservatives, "Why, we began fifteen ships during the six months that we were in office; but the Liberals began no ships during the next two years." Why not? Because we shall be finishing these ships which the Conservative Government began. And in the next place, when the time comes, we shall have more barometric diagrams, showing, in coloured figures, how enormously the Liberals have again raised the national expenditure, without a foot-note to say that part of the increase was due to the fifteen ships which the Conservatives had commenced.

Gentlemen, of course I hold that the national expenditure should be closely watched. I confess I am myself uneasy at the tendency, which I see in many quarters, to neglect public economy. The view is even sometimes put forward that, if you can only devise a system of taxation by which you may put the burden upon new shoulders, it will no longer be so necessary to pay that attention to national economy which has been the great boast of the Liberal party in time past. But I am of opinion that wherever you place the taxation, however you may try to shift it from one shoulder to another shoulder, an exorbitant national expenditure weighs upon the people at large, cripples their industry, and is distinctly a great national disadvantage. I say, therefore, the economical administration of the national finances must always be treated as a matter of vital importance to all classes of the community.

Now, will you permit me to say a word or two upon the question of Taxation, and the means of raising these large sums

which are necessary both for our local and for our Imperial services? No person will take an adequate view of the situation, who does not put the cost of these two great services together. Some taxes may be placed upon one class of people or upon one kind of property, others upon another class and upon other kinds of property, but you must take the whole together. I hope I may, before any audience, however Radical, however democratic, put forward the view, with every chance that it will be accepted, that, while a re-adjustment of burdens may take place, and while the most rigorous examination must be made as to whether labour pays too much in the present circumstances of the case, nevertheless taxation and representation should go together, and representation and taxation, and that no class in the community would wish to stand aloof from bearing its share—if it be not more than its just share—of those joint burdens which it is necessary that the nation at large should carry. The most numerous class in the country, having come into power, will desire, I believe, a careful examination to discover what is an equitable system of taxation, but they will not hold that the burden should be entirely borne by others. They will stand by the principle, which has always been a principle in the British Constitution, that all classes, according to their ability, should share, not only in the privileges, but in the duties and in the responsibilities of the State. Well, labour, real property, and personal property, all contribute a share; and one of the most interesting duties of the new Parliament will be, to bring all the figures and all the facts together, and to examine what property, if any, and what class, if any, is not bearing its full share of contributions to the State.

I said the other night that it fell to my lot—I think in the *Distribution of Taxation*. year 1871—to make a very exhaustive examination as to the burdens on land. It was an interesting enquiry. I had to examine what proportion of taxation was being borne by land as compared with other property, and how the burden on the land compared with the burden borne by land in other countries. It was necessary to put both local and Imperial taxation together, and this was one of the results—that, as regards Imperial taxation alone, land in this country paid a smaller proportion towards the Imperial revenue than in almost any country in Europe. Land, I think, was paying only 12 per cent. of the total revenue raised by the State, which was clearly an insufficient amount. But it was

*The Burdens  
of Land,*

necessary to examine also what proportion real property bore in local taxation. That, of course, was a very large sum. In that year the rates amounted to £16,500,000 in England, or, I think, £20,000,000 for the whole of the United Kingdom, a sum which, I am sorry to see—and it shows the immense importance of the matter—has risen from £20,000,000 at that time to £32,000,000 or £33,000,000 now. I think it is high time that local taxation should be overhauled when we see these gigantic sums spent by local authorities. Incidentally let me say that at that time there were twenty different local authorities which were spending money in England. How far the case may be as complicated in Scotland I do not know. But to return to the sum of £16,500,000 which rested upon real property. This addition brought up the total proportion of Imperial and local taxation paid by real property to about 29 per cent. of the whole; and that curiously enough was almost exactly the same percentage as the percentage in France. Real property paid infinitely less towards Imperial taxation in England; but, adding local taxes, it paid the same as it paid in France.

*And Houses.*

But this is only half of the question. Real property is composed of two great factors—land and houses; and land, as it were, has had the advantage of an extremely rich and prosperous partner in houses. While at the beginning land and houses paid almost the same sum in taxes, the increase in the number of houses became so stupendous that the burdens on land were greatly lightened, because the proportion paid by houses was so much greater. When we hear that real property is bearing such gigantic burdens, we must not think that it is real property in land which is paying so much. The enormous value of houses throughout the United Kingdom has immensely relieved taxation upon land. This, then, is the spirit in which I think the question of the readjustment of taxes must be approached. You must consider all the elements, you must consider land, you must consider houses, you must consider personal property, and you must consider the consuming classes, and then make what you think a fair distribution of the various burdens between them all. This is, I need not tell you, a highly complicated problem; but it is not one which ought to baffle politicians if they approach it in a just and equitable spirit. I was asked the other day, for instance, with regard to land, Ought not the land-tax to be re-

imposed in the old form? I reply, That is not an adequate mode of stating the question as to what land should pay. On the one hand, the value of land has greatly increased since old times. That is an argument in favour of an increase of the taxation upon it. On the other hand, side by side with this increase in the value of land, there has also been an enormous increase of local burdens. That is an argument against such increase of taxation. All these matters must be brought together, and when you have brought them together, then will be the time to determine what is the proper proportion that land must bear. We shall not forget, if we have to deal with this question, that land must not hide behind houses. Many a time have I seen in debates in the House of Commons, representatives of landowners utilising the ratepayer, and saying, "Here are the poor ratepayers in towns; they are being rated more heavily and heavily every day." Under cover of this plea to relieve the rates on houses, they urge remissions which include land.

But, on the other side, it must not be forgotten that rents may have fallen very seriously since the time when this investigation took place, while the burdens have increased. Clearly there are a variety of aspects from which the case must be looked at; we must not run away with simple cries—that rates are much too high, and must be lowered. It depends on *what* rates ought to be lowered, and rates upon what kind of property. The most complicated problem with which I have ever in my life had to deal, whether in finance or in economics, has been this—on whom do the rates upon houses really fall—upon the consumers—namely, the inhabitants of the houses—or upon the people who build the houses, or upon the ground landlords? You must find out upon whom the tax falls before you begin to repeal it; and that leads me to the point with which I wish to conclude this portion of my remarks. I can imagine candidates being asked to pledge themselves against every possible tax that can be imposed. "Will you vote against such and such a tax, —it is a tax upon trade?" "Certainly," the candidate says, "it is a horrible tax; I will vote against it." "Will you give your vote in order to relieve the ratepayers of burdens that are really becoming intolerable?" "Certainly," the answer is; "I will vote to reduce these burdens." The Chancellor of the Exchequer when about to propose his Budget is in a like predicament. He gets letters suggesting the repeal of every possible tax. But take care, when you are shooting at the pigeon, that you do not kill the crow;

*Who Pays  
the Rates?*

*And Bears the  
Taxes!*

and that when you are trying to relieve some one, you do not relieve the wrong person; and take care, when you want to strike at some man or some class, that you do not impose the tax in such a way, that he will be able to shift the burden upon a totally different class. For instance, you may wish to tax a particular class of tradesmen. Well, but the tradesmen may pass on the tax to their customers at once; and, while you think you have been taxing the tradesmen, you have been taxing the consumers, and you may possibly be taxing yourself. So, again, you may wish to strike at capitalists, but the capitalist may move his capital to some other place, and you have simply reduced the amount of capital available for the payment of wages. Have I made myself intelligible to you? What I wish to convey to you is this, that, in these matters, a superficial view is frequently a wrong view, and that you require a real examination of one of the most difficult problems—namely, who ultimately pays a particular tax—before you can deal with problems of this kind. I make this remark, because when I am asked, Will you vote for the repeal of this tax or that? it may be thought, that I give less satisfactory answers than some of my competitors or some of my opponents; but the reason is that I am so convinced of the necessity of avoiding that great fault of striking at the wrong man, and of finding that you have made a great mistake when it is too late.

*All Classes  
interested in  
Economy,*

But remember, gentlemen, that one of the best means of avoiding the cruelties of taxation is to avoid any violent increase of expenditure. No tax can ever be defended by an abstract argument. You will always find that any tax, if it is pulled to pieces by a clever man who is put forward by those who have to pay the tax, can be shown to be the most injurious, and the worst tax, in the whole world. And so I say—in the strongest terms—that those will not be doing their duty to the country who do not keep a sharp, even a stern, look-out as regards the increase of expenditure, whether Imperial or local. The industry of the country is deeply interested in light taxation; and I rejoice to think that the producing classes are now, to a great extent, also holders of deposits in savings banks, and are interested not only as workmen, but also, if I may use the phrase, as capitalists, as property owners—in the credit of the State and in the incidence of taxation. I am told that in Edinburgh, as in other cities, the working-classes have large investments in the savings banks, and thus are largely interested in

the credit of the State, and in the securities of the State. Let me mention a case which came into my mind at this moment. There are places on the Continent where there has been great local expenditure, and great local expenditure for good objects. What has happened? The savings of the working-classes in the Savings Banks have been taxed, and even the wages of domestic servants. They have run up their local taxation to that extent that they have been obliged to tax the economies and the savings of some of the poorest of the working-classes. I say, therefore, that all classes have an interest in assisting Parliament to keep down expenditure which, in some form or other, will otherwise weigh upon themselves. Do not let us run away with the idea—I do not think I need say many words upon it—that taxes upon property are for the benefit of the poorer classes, or of the producing classes. So deeply has the danger of such a notion been recognised by our cousins in the United States that in their Constitution, democratic as it is, they have provisions carefully guarding the property of individual men. They do not look upon such a system as simply protecting wealth. They consider that the poor and the industrious have equally got the greatest interest in the accumulations of labour being protected by law. And in the same way, I hold that all classes are deeply interested in the efficient administration of the laws which exist. Take the case of the housing of the working-classes. The examinations we made during over two years' inquiry showed us that if the laws as they exist had been properly administered there would not have been those frightful scandals that were discovered in many parts of the United Kingdom. The laws were there, but they were not properly set in motion. Many other laws are in the same case besides. We are going to pass new laws, we have passed new laws, there is a constant demand for new laws, based upon noble views of improving society, and of improving morality; but let us at least take care that the laws that we have shall be properly executed. A law has been passed during the last few months—the Criminal Law Amendment Act—a law by which we hope better to protect poor girls. I am continually asked questions with regard to amending that law; but let us first see to it that the law as it now stands is administered with rigid impartiality, and that those who are responsible for its execution take care that the exertions which have caused that law to pass shall not be without fruit. Let us look to it that the guardians of the law and the public

*And Efficiency  
of Adminis-  
tration.*

*Illusory  
Legislation.*

all work together in order to stamp out some of the fearful evils which have been revealed. Depend upon it, enlightened public opinion, keeping its eye firmly upon this question, and vigilance on the part of the representatives of the people that the law shall be effectively carried out, will be more powerful for good than continuing from month to month to make new suggestions to improve the law before we can see what we can do under it in its new form. Efficient laws rather than many laws—practical laws rather than Utopian laws! Depend upon it that, unless we take care, we shall not realise all the hopes that we entertain. The last Parliament began with great expectations; it ended in many disappointments. May the Parliament, the election of which will begin to-morrow, begin with practical hopes, and end with duties discharged.



## XII.

Delivered in the Music Hall, Edinburgh, on the  
24th November 1885.

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Mr. GOSCHEN said—Electors of the Eastern Division of Edinburgh,—as the Chairman has said, the time of preliminaries is over. The decisive day will come to-morrow. The time is past for cheering and hooting, for speaking and heckling, and to-morrow the hour will have come for the voter, in the seclusion of the polling-booth, to drop his vote into the ballot box, and to deliver his verdict on the respective merits of the candidates, and on the soundness of their opinions. But what a narrow view it would be of the events of to-morrow, if we here in this Eastern Division were simply to think of the personal considerations involved! It is not only in the Eastern Division that to-morrow there will be a great contest; but from all parts of the country telegrams will be coming in declaring who are the victors in the struggle in which we are to be engaged—whether it is that party to which most of us—I hope nearly all of us—in this hall belong; whether we have been able to attain such a majority as will enable us to carry out the great work in which we hope to be engaged. But beyond the personal considerations of all these contests, beyond the party issues which may affect us to-morrow, there remains for the great bulk of the nation, who will not look merely to personal or party considerations, the great question, Whether the issue of these elections will be for the credit, the honour, and the interest of the nation at large? All of us who are here as lovers of our country, will take such an interest far beyond the personal contest in which we are engaged.

Language is held which conveys the idea that, as soon as we have been elected, the key will be turned upon us, and that we shall be kept inside the walls of the House of Commons for the

*The New  
Parliament  
probably  
short-lived.*

span of five years, to agree or disagree, as best we may, upon all the problems of the day. I do not think this forecast probable. I do not believe in arguments based on the supposition that no dissolution is possible till after our five years have run. Alas for electioneering efforts! Alas for the comfort of candidates! I fear that, before many years are over, we candidates shall stand before our constituents again. I do not believe in a long continuance of the Parliament which is about to be elected.

And I will tell you why. It is on account of that difficulty on which Mr. Gladstone spoke in this hall not many hours ago. We are in face of this tremendous dilemma. If we were to make concessions to the Irish party which would satisfy that party, they would have to be concessions touching the legislative union between the two countries, and no such concessions can ever be made without submitting them to the verdict of the country at large. But if they are not made—and I trust they will not be proposed—then we are threatened with an opposition which may render all government so impossible, which may render all Parliamentary action so ineffective, that no other course may remain open, but to appeal once more to the judgment of the country. And so, gentlemen, I regret to say that I am afraid that, as regards the next Parliament, we shall have a short life, though possibly not a merry one. To that Parliament, for however long it may last, I ask the electors of the Eastern Division of Edinburgh to return me. I wish to sit in that Parliament, and to share in its work. And I have come here, gentlemen, not to ask for your suffrages under the shelter of any other man's name, however great and honoured that man's name may be—I come here to ask your suffrages on the strength of the address which I have issued to the electors—on the principles which I have enunciated in all the meetings that I have held—on the utterances to which many of the electors have been good enough to listen. To those utterances I adhere. These are the pledges by which I am prepared to stand. I have endeavoured to show to the electors my mind upon almost every prominent political question of the day. I wish them to take me upon those principles, upon those opinions, and upon no other grounds. I have been asked to give my views also upon a number of subsidiary questions, but here I have found myself compelled to refuse to give pledges in many cases. I think that if the various can-

*Definition  
of Personal  
Position.*

didates standing before the constituencies were to be arranged in order of merit, according to the number of promises that they have made, I should stand rather low upon the list. Prince Bismarck once told me a story of a friend of his, who was so afraid of committing himself, during his sleep or in his dreams, to questions that might be put to him, that when he got up early in the morning he said "No" three times over. "No! no! no!" that was his first morning utterance. Gentlemen, I am afraid that there are a good many candidates who, after boisterous and excited speeches at their electoral meetings, may feel inclined, at the conclusion of those meetings, to say to themselves and to their friends, "No! no! no!" lest they should have been guilty of too exuberant utterances in their electoral somnambulism. I do not envy the condition of candidates or members who, when they shall walk up the floor of the House of Commons to take the oath of allegiance, and to sign their names upon the roll of the Commons, shall hear behind them the clank of many chains, which they have imposed upon themselves, and consented to wear, as the price of their admission to Parliament. (Cheers and slight hisses.) I hear expressions of dissent. Are they in favour of the man who wears the chains? For my part, I believe that the electors of this division will wish for a representative, and not for a servant who would go in chains to Parliament.

Well, you know the authoritative programme of the party of which I have fully accepted all the points—namely, Reformed Procedure in the House of Commons; the reform of local government and local taxation; improved registration laws; and large reforms in the land laws. All these points I accept cordially and from my heart. Most of them have formed long since a part of my political convictions. One word as regards registration. Reformed registration means the granting of greater access, easier access, to the exercise of the franchise to those to whom votes have been given. It means that by no technical difficulty are you to take away with one hand what you give with the other. It does not mean that under cover of a registration law there should be a new Reform Bill, but that the Reform Acts which have been already carried should be made effective.

Then one word, and one word only, on the question of Procedure. *Procedure.* I cannot touch this subject without on every occasion protesting against the insinuation, so often made, that we Liberals, of all

people in the world, wish to stifle freedom of debate. That is not the point. What we feel is that, except with reformed procedure, we shall not be able to legislate at all. And, on this question, why should not both the great parties in the State work together. By the joint action of the two great parties it was possible to carry out the Redistribution Act with extraordinary smoothness, though it largely affected almost every constituency in Great Britain and Ireland. Why should not all parties combine to see whether they cannot make their common instrument—the House of Commons—efficient for the purpose for which electors, whether Conservatives or Liberals, send up the members to the House? There can be no reason whatever why both parties should not take an equal interest in this great question.

*Local  
Government.*

As regards the third point—the Reform of Local Government—I have spoken so often that I do not propose to trouble you upon it to-night, beyond this observation, that we must beware lest we so overcharge any bill for the reform of local government, by dealing with all the duties that may be placed upon local authorities, that we may not be able to pass the bill at all. There are two separate branches of that reform. There is, firstly, the constitution of our local authorities on a new, a popular, a uniform, and an intelligible basis; and secondly, the redistribution of the attributes and duties which are to be assigned to local authorities when reformed. The first stage must come first, and no obstinacy in insisting that particular duties ought to be placed upon those local authorities should be allowed to jeopardise that which is the chief point, the immediate reconstruction of our system of local government and local taxation. And the inhabitants of this city of Edinburgh will not object that some of the time, and I fear a large portion of the time, of the new Parliament should be devoted to a great object—a difficult and complicated object—the reform of the government of London. That will be one of the first duties to be undertaken by the Parliament which will be summoned in some weeks.

A few words upon the fourth item in the authorised programme—I mean the subject of Land. We are all agreed—though I have seen, by questions that have been put to me, that some electors still seem to be unaware of my views upon the subject—we are all agreed to use our utmost endeavours to make land accessible to all purchasers, large and small; and by various reforms, such

as greater facilities of transfer, reduction of cost of transfer, and other means, to bring land, which is cheap now, within the reach of every one who cares to invest in it. I was asked a question last night with regard to the views of Mr. Chamberlain upon this subject. I was asked to what extent I should agree to his views, if they should be endorsed by Mr. Gladstone? That I call a very hypothetical question. I do not know, even if I attempt to judge by his Manifesto, what is Mr. Gladstone's attitude towards the land programme of Mr. Chamberlain. But now, *Land.* one serious word upon this matter. We must distinguish between two important proposals. The one is, to promote, to the very utmost of our ability, a system of allotments which shall be attached to the cottages of working men—allotments which will increase their comfort, which will increase their happiness, and which every one desires should be conferred upon them. The other proposal is somewhat different. It is to supply diminutive farms of three or four, or ten acres, or whatever the size may be, for the purpose of what one may call agricultural enterprise. The one plan is to supplement the resources of a family otherwise engaged, by giving them an allotment of land. The other is an endeavour, artificially, to stimulate what, if produced naturally, we probably all of us desire—namely, the increase of peasant proprietors, and the increase of men who would cultivate their own small properties. I am entirely in accord with the objects aimed at in both respects; and I rejoice to think that, under the influence of spontaneous feeling, and under the influence of public opinion, the system of allotments is daily receiving a greater and greater development, and that day by day, and week by week, more allotments are handed over for cultivation to industrious labourers. But, having said this much, let me ask you to consider whether we are justified in looking for a remedy for the depression of trade from the process which is alleged to be at the bottom of this movement—the restoration of the agricultural labourer to the soil? To restore him? It would be, as I say, most desirable that you should multiply the numbers of agricultural labourers cultivating their own land, but you cannot *restore* a population which is five or six times as large as it used to be when they cultivated the soil. The parallel between the two periods, between the two situations, is perfectly illusory. You cannot restore these additional millions to the same ground which was held by a far smaller number of millions; and

if you could do so, supposing you restored them now, who is not aware that the population of this country increases by some 300,000 or 350,000 souls a year, which means an addition of three or four millions to the population in ten years! Are they all to be placed upon the old soil? It is impossible! You may wish it, and I say let as many as possible be placed on the land—I won't say be restored; that is not the right word—but let as many as possible be placed upon the soil. But surely it is absolutely Utopian to think that, in this small island, our teeming millions can be so planted upon the soil as to relieve us from the necessity of looking mainly to the industrial energies of the kingdom for the supply of the population with adequate wages and sufficient food, and for the general prosperity. I will work in the direction of doing what can be done, but I will not be misled by a Utopian belief in impossibilities, while ready to consider and anxious to suggest every practical proposal that may increase the numbers of those who are interested in the soil of the United Kingdom and Ireland.

*Ireland.*

Well, gentlemen, we have not to look only within the authorised programme for the subjects which are interesting the public at this moment. Other subjects crowd upon us, and some of them cannot be put away. Foremost amongst these is one upon which most eloquent words were used in this hall to-day—the subject of Ireland—and perhaps I can say something that Mr. Gladstone could scarcely say himself, and it is that to him, personally, the action which is now being taken towards the party which he leads by the inhabitants of that country which he has so largely benefited is simply the height of ingratitude. If there lives one statesman of this country to whom the Irish ought to be grateful, it is Mr. Gladstone. What has he not sacrificed on their behalf? Only those who know the abuse to which at many times he has been exposed; only those who have seen him standing in the House of Commons endeavouring to hold his own against the insults of the representatives of that country which he has tried to conciliate; only those can realise to what a height of ingratitude politics in Ireland have come, when a manifesto such as that which we have all lately read is issued by the Irish leaders against a statesman who is known to be so great a friend of the Irish nation. We all know the fearfully anxious issues that are pending in Ireland. We see, and we regret to see,

the chasm—the yawning chasm—which still divides us from our fellow-subjects—from our brothers, in Ireland. We behold that chasm, and from its depth there rise up cries against the injustice committed to Ireland in former times; but we have endeavoured to redeem the past, and into that chasm we have thrown down, in order to fill it up, concession after concession by which we thought we might conciliate the Irish people. We have toppled down into it great boulders of principles; we have made gigantic Parliamentary sacrifices; and I venture to say—I would say this in the face of Europe, in the face of the world—that no country has ever shown such toleration under great provocation as has been displayed by the self-contained, steady public opinion of these islands. Under tremendous provocation we have not wished to retaliate, and if we are met—as we are sometimes met—by cries of “Coercion,” you know what our reply must be—that the coercion is on the other side, and that so long as the loyalists of Ireland are not permitted liberty of action, liberty of purchase, liberty of marketing, liberty of dealing with whom they like; so long as their lives are beset by the coercion of the Parnellites, so long it is the bounden duty of this country to stand up in favour of liberty and law. It yawns still—that chasm of division—though into it have been thrown the lives of statesmen and the efforts of Parliaments; but we will not be turned aside from the task of endeavouring to bridge it over by justice; nor shall any action upon the part of Irish malcontents divert British statesmen from the endeavour still to secure that union which lies at the base of the prosperity of the United Kingdom.

But a special duty rests upon us—one sacred duty—amongst the many we shall have to perform. However far we may go in conciliation, and in endeavouring to allow the Irish to govern themselves, I do not think that we ought ever to be parties to placing at the mercy of the National League, the property or the lives of the loyalist classes in Ireland. We know that the Nationalists have called certain classes in Ireland robbers. We shall not, I trust, allow them to treat the property of these classes as stolen goods; and so I say that, from whatever quarter such proposals may come, I shall never consent to any arrangement as regards the transfer of powers to the Irish local or central government, which would place at their mercy the property or the happiness of the loyalist classes in Ireland.

*Our Duty  
to Irish  
Loyalists.*

*The House  
of Lords.*

Let me say one word upon another subject, which also lies outside of the official programme,—the very delicate question of the Constitution of the House of Lords—a subject referred to in the manifesto which is before the country, and which has formed the subject of animated debate between a great and popular Scottish peer—Lord Rosebery—and some leaders of the advanced section of our party. Now, I agree with Lord Rosebery in the opinion that the House of Lords ought to be reformed. I believe one of the best reforms would be an internal and spontaneous reform, which would mean its ceasing to be a simple Tory club. The misfortune of the House of Lords, I believe, is not that it is aristocratic, but that it is simply Conservative; and that, if the country looks to the peers for their decision, it knows beforehand, precisely upon the lines of party, what that decision will be. That seems to me in the long run an intolerable situation; and so I say that unless the Lords can take heart and shake off those shackles of party, which constitute them a simple Conservative assembly, their reform must be undertaken in order that the institution may survive.

But another plan is suggested—abolish the House of Lords. On that point I say to my Radical friends, “If the Lords are to be abolished, let the verdict of the country be taken upon that subject by a straight issue.” It was suggested—I think by Sir Charles Dilke in controversy with Lord Rosebery—that you ought to leave the House of Lords unreformed, so that, remaining unreformed, it might get into bad repute with the country. A kind of paralysis was to seize it, and it would die an inglorious and ignominious death! Sir Charles Dilke added that, so long as there were Radicals in the Cabinet, they would not consent to a reform of the House of Lords. But is that a fair way in which to deal with what, after all, is one of the great institutions of the country? I am not prepared to see any single part of our Constitution perish by humiliation and decay. Let it, if it must end, end by the verdict of the country that it ought to cease to exist; but do not say, We will neither reform it, nor bring forward a motion to end it, but we will see it get deeper and deeper into the mire, so that it may perish from the humiliation it has incurred. That is not the mode in which any of us ought to deal with any part of our Constitution.

Let me touch upon one more subject, which is even more deli-



cate than the reform of the House of Lords—the question of the Churches—the Church of England and the Church of Scotland. I do not propose to enter upon arguments, but I wish to clear up my personal position in respect to this matter, in a very few words. It has been said that my opinions and position upon this point are ambiguous. I deny it altogether. I say my position with regard to it is perfectly clear. Conservative speakers have endeavoured, in their comments on my statement with regard to the Churches, to mix up the questions of the Established Church of England and the Established Church of Scotland. But I have not concealed from any elector, nor from any meeting, my view that the two stand upon a totally different footing. I have said straight out, without reservation and without hesitation, that in England, as a member of the Established Church, I was against the abolition of that Church. I have said with equal clearness that, as regards the Established Church of Scotland, I agree with those who declare it to be a matter that must be settled by the Scottish nation. That is the view which has been taken by the leaders of the party; but I have not adopted it simply because it is the view of the leaders of the party, but because I think it just that the people of Scotland should decide this question for themselves. Well, then, it is said, “Is it right that you should leave a question of that kind to be decided by those whom you represent, instead of having an opinion upon it yourself?” My answer is, that it is their Church, and not mine; it is the Church of Scotland. If I thought that such an issue as the predominance of Christianity, or the great interests of the Empire, were at stake, then it would be my duty, not only as a representative of a Scottish constituency, but as an individual, to say what my opinion was; but I do not think that the maintenance or the overthrow of the Established Church of Scotland is a question of that kind. I hold it to be one which it is fair to leave to the decision of the Scotch themselves. And I pledge myself to this, that I will do my utmost to ascertain what the views of the Scottish people are with regard to it, and that I will not allow the sympathies that I may have for one Church or the other to influence me, if I should have the honour of representing a Scottish constituency, but will seek to decide this matter in the direction that seems most in accordance with the interests and the wishes of Scotland at large.

Let me pass from legislative proposals to some matters of import-

*The Churches  
of England  
and Scotland.*

*National  
Economy.*

ance with regard to the administration of the kingdom. One great point is that of Expenditure and National Economy—national economy which is becoming rapidly less popular than it used to be. I confess that I have failed to see in the utterances of many candidates for Parliamentary honours, any assurance whatever that they will be zealous and ferocious guardians of the public purse. Believe me, some little ferocity is necessary in the process, because while many people are extremely anxious for economy in the abstract, when it comes to recommending any particular plan of their own, they are for casting economy to the winds. You can have no idea of the difficulty which a Government meets with in Parliament, in resisting pressure from various sides for increased expenditure. From many localities come various demands. I have been asked a great many questions with regard to the interesting point of pensions: “Would you consent to abolish pensions?” and I have always given the same answer, namely, that as regards perpetual pensions, they will never be proposed again; and that, generally, the whole question of pensions requires careful watching. But I know by experience what often follows. If you don’t pension a man, you give him a higher salary; and if you give him a higher salary, and then the time comes that his work is done, members of Parliament come forward and say, “Is it right that this man, who has served the State for so many years, should go away without a pension?” And then there come letters to the press and sensational paragraphs—“Here is a man who for thirty or forty years has been in the service of the State, and he goes out a beggar, even without a pension.” That occurs over and over again. And I am not sure whether it is not the more economical plan to bear that sentiment in mind, and to remember that servants of the State cannot be turned on to the street at the end of the period of their service. Public opinion won’t stand it. People may approve of it in the abstract, but they will not stand it in the particular case. (“Yes.”) Well, I hear dissent; but what does that mean? Does it mean that public opinion will stand it? I doubt it. I am not thinking of the rich men, or even of the men belonging to the middle classes, but of non-commissioned officers, sailors, clerks on low salaries, and so forth. There is, I perfectly admit, a gigantic expenditure growing up, which requires to be watched from day to day, for the pensions of soldiers, of seamen, of revenue officers, and of every single class of those employed in

*Pensions.*

Government offices, and there is nothing more difficult than to reconcile the idea of the duty of the State towards its servants with the necessary economy that ought to be observed. Don't think that I am indifferent to this subject of the increase of pensions. It is startling—it is one of those things which must occupy the attention of statesmen. But you cannot neglect, and in any reform you must take into consideration, the counterbalancing force of public opinion, which is extremely sensitive on the point of sending men who have served the public into the streets without a penny.

Similar points present themselves with regard to men employed on Government works. I saw a question put to another candidate, as to whether he would support Government work being given out on private contract instead of being done in the Government establishments. That sounds extremely popular, but what is to become of the dockyard men in the service of the State? Are they to be discharged in order to increase the labour in private dockyards? Then, again, you have to consider how you can carry on efficiently a Government establishment under the constant interference of public opinion. Perhaps I am not an impartial witness in this matter. I confess when I had to preside over a great department, and I was told that we were not as business-like as private yards, I said to myself: In the case of private yards, if a foreman has a dispute with his employer, is it brought immediately before the public? If some of the men are discharged because there is not work enough for them to do, is there at once a Parliamentary inquiry? If a man is taken on to whom an unusually high salary is given because he is the best you can get, is there an immediate public inquiry demanded because other men do not get so much? Yet men say, "Look at these business-like dockyards of private firms, and look at the unbusiness-like dockyards of the Government." Why, the conditions are perfectly different. If I allude to this subject, it is for the purpose of entreating the public, while it exercises the utmost vigilance, in seeing that no wrong shall be committed, and that the public money shall be judiciously spent—not continually to interfere with the action of the Executive in its dealings with these dockyards, and not to countenance the dockyard members coming forward at every possible moment to interfere with the Executive in the carrying out of their executive duties. If the public wishes to have that interference, its work cannot be done in the same business-like way as in

*Government  
Establish-  
ments.*

private establishments. I am not only anxious for economy of expenditure, but, at the same time, I am most anxious for efficiency of expenditure. It is much easier to bring a general charge of extravagance, than a general charge of inefficiency. In efficiency, so many questions are muddled up together, that the two parties will never agree as to whether efficiency has been secured. It is rather difficult to decide on the merits of rival sets of statistics, but even that is easier than to decide upon the respective claims to efficiency. I have alluded to these points in order to remind the electors in this constituency, and elsewhere where my words may be read, that we must not, in our legislative efforts, forget to look to the efficiency of administration.

*Growth of  
Sentiment  
in Politics.*

There are other large subjects outside of the legislative programme, outside of the administrative programme, on which I see that the minds of a vast number of the electors are set, and I am anxious to bear witness to the unquestionable and interesting fact that in the countless questions which have been put to me, in the many proposals that have been submitted to me, in the many pledges I have been asked to take, those have been infinitely more numerous which referred to matters of duty, of sentiment, of social reform, than those which had to do with the pecuniary advantages of any class of the community. If attempts have been made in any way to excite cupidity in the new electors, these attempts, so far as I can judge, have most entirely failed. The electors take interest in the suffering of animals; they take an interest in the Parliamentary, municipal, and social position of women; they take an interest in a number of questions relating, as I have said, rather to sentiment than to profit. But there are very few questions that have been put before me which indicate any demand, that any one class should enjoy a peculiar pecuniary advantage in taxation or otherwise over the other classes of the community; and I point to this as a matter of which we may well be proud.

Let us mention another cause for rejoicing. There is a great desire for further legislation on many social questions, but I am glad to think, that, while we behold these efforts after social progress by means of legislation, it is, at the same time, patent that public opinion, in preparing the way for legislative changes, has of itself already achieved tremendous triumphs. Public opinion has increased the safety of ships going to sea, even more than the legislation which has been carried with a view to such increased safety.

Public opinion has done much in rousing landlords all over the country, and especially in the large towns, to devote more care to the condition of their great properties; and in London at this moment there is a vast reform in the housing of the working-classes, due in a great measure to the pressure of public opinion, and, so far, but little due to those reforms of legislation on which we have been engaged. So again, public opinion has worked in the direction of increasing the number of allotments. Public opinion is working in the direction of increasing the number of cottages for the agricultural classes. I rejoice in all this efficiency of public opinion, and I like to think how much better it is, if liberty of contract is to be curtailed, to place upon it the fetters of duty and the restraints of public opinion, rather than the restraints of legislative enactments. We are bound to remember that the Liberal party is called after, and has been baptized into, the name of Liberty. We will restrain that liberty when we see that it is prejudicial to our neighbours, that it is prejudicial to the interests of the State; but the evidence which we already have gained of the progress of opinion is a bright and fair augury of the result which we may still hope to see in the future, from a healthy and an enthusiastic public opinion. Further legislation there must be. Further legislation there will be; and I am glad to think that in that legislation we shall be able to have the assistance of many enthusiasts. But we shall hope to be able, if I may use the phrase, to put enthusiasm into harness, and to yoke it to practical measures. We shall have now many recruits who have joined the forces, the old forces of the Constitution. I trust that with these new recruits will be mingled the veterans, and that together, with a disciplined and steady swing, they will march forward upon the path of progress; that they will march forward with a steady swing, and not in an undisciplined manner; and that, thus united, we may be able to overtake even the labours of the past, and rival the efforts of the Liberals who have gone before us.

A few words only upon another subject (as I am making my last confession of faith to you before the poll)—upon a subject which cannot be set aside, upon a subject to which I have addressed myself before every audience of my fellow-countrymen whom I have met—a subject that must always excite great interest—I mean Foreign Policy. You know I am one of those who believe that our duties and responsibilities cannot, from our posi-

*Triumphs  
of Public  
Opinion.*

*Foreign  
Policy.*

*The Three  
C's—*

tion, be confined to the inhabitants of these islands; and that, if we wished it, it is impossible for us to put away the duties, obligations, and responsibilities which we have incurred elsewhere. I have put my views as to the principles of foreign policy which ought to be followed by the Liberal party, into three words. I have said that there ought to be clean-handedness, courage, and continuity—three C's which I will run against any three F's in the world. And it is very dangerous of me to speak in this way, very dangerous indeed, because in a speech I made in Edinburgh some time ago, I said there was always a fallacy when you put such rhetorical threes together, and that one out of the three invariably killed another. For instance, you have liberty, equality, and fraternity—well, equality kills liberty, or liberty kills equality; but you cannot have both. So with the three F's, either free sale kills fair rents, or fair rents kill free sale. You cannot have both; but I am venturesome enough to believe that in my three points, not one will kill another. Continuity will not kill courage; and never shall it be said that courage would kill clean-handedness.

*Continuity,*

Continuity—is that a Utopian idea? I have more than once declared that we shall never have a satisfactory foreign policy till we are able to do as we used to do—to lift it above the influence of party, and till both parties shall unite to say that before the face of Europe this country is but as one. Of what use are barren recriminations—of what use is it to prove your own home antagonist in the wrong, if, while you are proving him in the wrong, you prove your country to be wrong in the sight of Europe? I wish that upon this point once more a common feeling might animate all classes of the community; that we might, in the face of Europe, treat all foreign questions as if we were one, not two nations. I don't care to see Europe on the watch for the turn our elections may take. It is no compliment, either to the one party or the other, to say that foreign capitals are waiting for the result of our elections to see what turn will be given to affairs. Let them know that there is a continuity in our policy, that there are certain questions, and certain principles, upon which the country is agreed, and we shall stand with that strength before the nations of Europe, to which we are justly entitled, and which I hope we may never forego. How are we to play our game,—how are we to play our cards with Continental nations, if, when Great Britain plays her card, she has standing behind her severe critics who look over her

hand, and discuss loudly and angrily what card ought to be played? What chance have you with the shrewd players of the world—for, depend upon it, we have often to do with men who play the game of diplomacy with great shrewdness—what chances have we, if we are subject to drawbacks of that kind? I wish that I could find support for my strong belief, that we should gradually go back to the practice, that while we fight our old party fights over our home affairs, we should not engage in these extremely angry battles over questions where sometimes vast colonial interests, sometimes vast Indian interests, sometimes the lives of brave men, sometimes the fortunes of subject populations, are involved. These are not battle grounds for fierce party fights. These are questions for the unanimous decision of patriotic men.

So much for Continuity, gentlemen. One word may I say upon the question of Clean-handedness—a modern doctrine, a doctrine *Clean-handedness,* worthy of the Liberal party, a doctrine which we have lifted now into what I trust may be considered an accepted position. It is not clean-handedness which has landed us in the majority of the difficulties by which we have been beset, and I think we have still to educate our Conservative friends to a certain extent to this doctrine. If they reply that they, on the other hand, may have educated us a little in the direction of courage and firmness—well, we shall deny the accusation, but we shall take their lecture to heart. But I am speaking of clean-handedness. In the great arrangements of the Berlin Conference, the Conservative Government committed, to my mind, a gigantic error in securing Cyprus as a gain for the United Kingdom. We abandoned there, for the sake of that island—I do not know if it is worth much, but that is not the point—we abandoned for the sake of that island our reputation, that we had gone into those famous negotiations, and had come out of them, with clean hands,—and a terrible penalty we paid. The seizure of Cyprus led to the difficulties with France with regard to Tunis, and with regard to Egypt. It was Cyprus which made it so hard for us to deal with the French in the division of influence in Egypt, and the concessions, made by us to France in allowing her to go to Tunis, had a most disastrous effect upon the Mussulman world. I have been told myself by men coming from Egypt, that the advance of the French in Tunis, the way in which they seized upon Tunis, had alarmed the Mussulmans through-

out Africa, and had added to the excitement which produced the Arabi revolt. So you see that the national error of trying to get something out of those difficulties, led to disasters which at that time could not be foreseen. I have been in entire accord with Her Majesty's Government in their decision, that we should not utilise any victories in Egypt, any feats of arms, for securing any particular advantage for this country, contrary to that undertaking of disinterestedness to which we were bound when we first went to Egypt and which we had announced to Europe. We were bound to come out of Egypt without any private advantage. There were times when the public got somewhat restive under this restraint; and I remember shipowners in London saying, "Surely now we might take the Suez Canal. We have sacrificed blood and treasure, and we are entitled to some acquisitions in return." Yes, if we had not pledged ourselves to the contrary! But we went in with a pledge of disinterestedness, and we must redeem that pledge; and whatever Government be in power, I trust they will come out of Egypt without having by one hair's-breadth evaded the pledge and the undertaking which was given in the name of the nation at large.

As for the evacuation of Egypt, the sooner it can be carried out with due respect to the duties which we have undertaken, the better it will be for this country. No one can wish that, with such strong international arrangements and inextricable treaty partnerships as now exist in Egypt—no one can wish that we should remain there hampered at every stage by other countries, and unable to act according to the best of our judgment—sometimes even unable to act according to the behests of our duty. And most of us, too, I believe, will rejoice when the hands of this country will be strengthened for any emergencies that may occur in other parts of the globe, by our being enabled to withdraw those large forces which have heroically represented this country in Egypt, but which we must desire to see released so soon as it can be done with due regard to the pledges that we have made.

I cannot, and I must not, detain you further upon this point. (Cries of "Go on.") No! I must not detain you. There must be limits to your patience, gentlemen. I have endeavoured to touch upon the legislation on which we must embark, the principles of administration on which we must act, the watchful economy which we ought to practise, and the efficient administration to which I hope we may attain. I have endeavoured, also,



to speak of our duties abroad, though in an inadequate manner; and I wish to add one word, too, upon our duty to our colonies. I spoke of continuity; I have spoken of clean-handedness; one word upon courage. The more courageous we are, the stronger we shall be in attracting the English-speaking populations throughout the world. Courage must be our watchword in all our dealings, both with foreign nations and with our colonial possessions. Such is a picture of the matters with which we shall have to deal. The new democracy is on the threshold of its duties. It would be a trite saying to use the phrase that the eyes of the world are upon you to see how those duties will be discharged. It is a truer thing to say that the interests of half the world are practically in your hands. Imagination is dazzled when it contemplates the enormous power that you will wield; because, from these islands, as the parent home of the English-speaking races, there go forth an influence and an example which will help to fashion the future destinies of many countries besides our own. Many of these duties open up to us tremendous responsibilities, but, please God, we will be equal to the discharge of those responsibilities. To us it belongs to hold high the standard of economic truth amongst the many heresies, the ignorances, and the narrownesses of some of the nations that surround us. To us it belongs, to show how a nation, unarmed, in the foreign sense, may yet in the jostling of all those Continental Powers, with their millions of armed subjects and with their compulsory service, be able to uphold its duties, its rights, and its interests, and, when the time comes, may spring to its feet to defend them, though our motto may be, "Peace on earth, and goodwill towards men." The Parliament which is about to be elected in the coming days will have to do its work. I trust that it may faithfully and honourably represent the opinions, the sentiments, the duties, the responsibilities of the nation at large. And when it has done its appointed work, then may history grasp a golden pen and write at the foot of the newest page of our national chronicles, that it is a blameless record of duty done and honour won.

*Courage.*

*Our Duty  
amongst the  
Nations.*

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